



FIND YOUR VOICE

**THE SACRED PATH:
A 300-HOUR YTT
COLLABORATION BETWEEN
ANDEAN YOGA & DIVINITREE YOGA**



*Helping yogis seek peace
purpose, and prosperity
in the busy modern world*



**With Love
Daya - Ann - Jordy**

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Creative General Notes:

Introduction: What Is Yoga?

Yoga comes from the Sanskrit word Yug, which means to connect, to yoke, to bind.

So what is binding with what?

Mind-Heart, Soul- Supersoul, finite- infinite, Man- Nature.

To what do we connect when we begin to practice?

Describe the feeling of being connected and to what you feel connected...

So what is Yoga?

Yoga is a practice and a philosophy that brings benefits at all levels. On a physical level, it is tonifying and detoxifies the body. Mentally it brings ease and relaxation to mind. Spiritually it awakens the sense of being part of the universe and that of being consequent with your actions.

It proposes a means to control the fluctuations of the mind.

In the Beginning there was desire which was the first seed of mind.....

Song of Creation – Rig Veda

“The term Yoga itself has many meanings including ‘to unite’, ‘to coordinate’, ‘to harmonize’, ‘to apply’, ‘to work’ and ‘to strive’, which may be used without any specific correlation with spiritual practice. Through this, Yoga covers any means of bringing a higher coordination of energy in life, which ultimately is the spiritual practice of inner transformation.” ~ David Frawley

A deeper insight from Light on Pranayama

God and nature existed before man appeared, but as man developed, he cultivated himself and began to realize his own potential.

When he was caught in the web of worldly joys, he found himself separated from God and nature.

Caught within the opposites, man felt the need for a personal divinity (Purusa) who was supreme, unaffected by afflictions, untouched by actions and reactions, and free from joy and sorrow.

In this quest to reach him, man devised a code of conduct whereby he could live in peace and harmony with nature, others, and himself. Man realized that he should keep his body healthy, strong, and clean to follow Dharma and experience the divinity within himself.

B.K.S Iyengar



Quotes



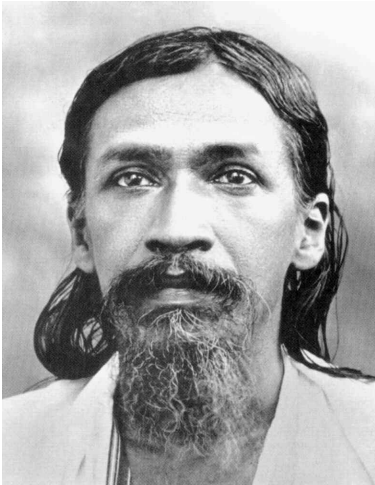
“Yoga means union. Etymologically, it is connected to the English word, yoke. Yoga means union with God, or, union of the little, ego-self with the divine Self, the infinite Spirit.” - Paramahansa Yogananda



“The supreme calling of every human being is to aspire to self realization. All other obligations are secondary.”

"To find yourself is to find God, and to find God is to find yourself".

~ **Anandamayi Ma**



“The spiritual life proceeds directly by a change of consciousness, a change from the ordinary consciousness, ignorant and separated from its true self and from God, to a greater consciousness in which one finds one's true being and comes first into direct and living contact and then into union with the Divine. For the spiritual seeker this change of consciousness is the one thing he seeks and nothing else matters.”~ Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga, Vol 1



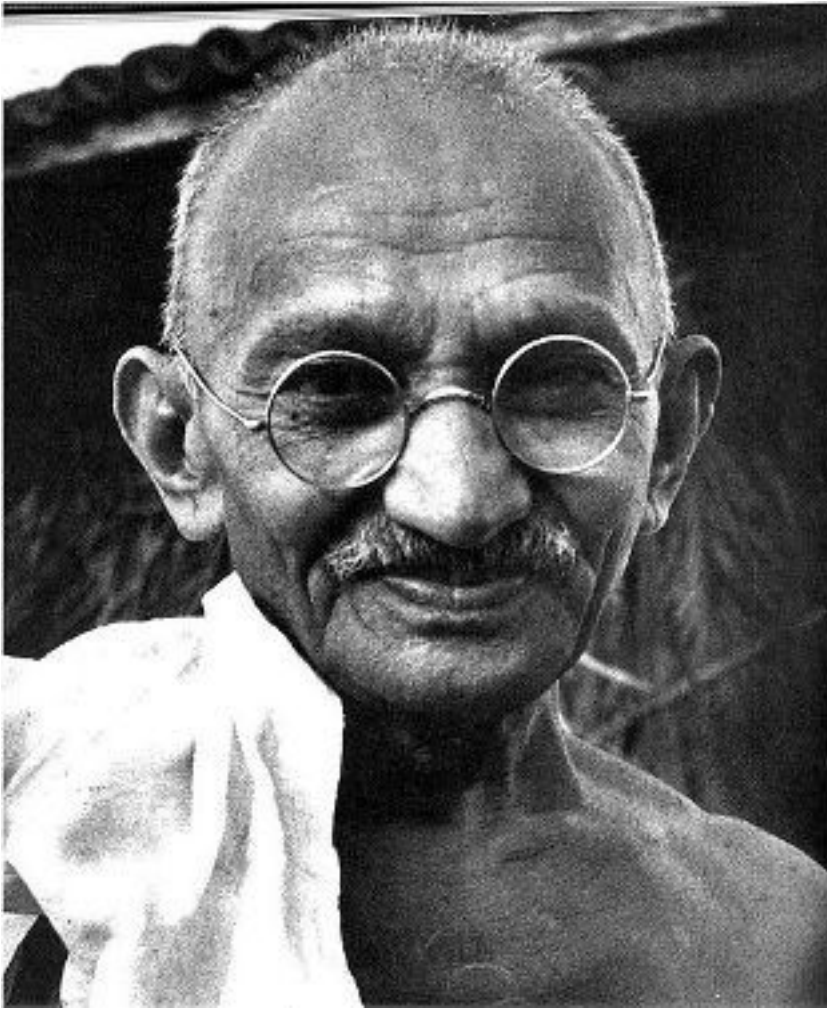
“The most extraordinary miracle of all is the profound genius of the human being in its capacity to grow. It is said that even the gods are jealous of humans, for they are already perfected, and we alone have the potential to scale the depths and heights of feeling pain and pleasure as we pave the way for unlimited realizations.” - Uma Inder



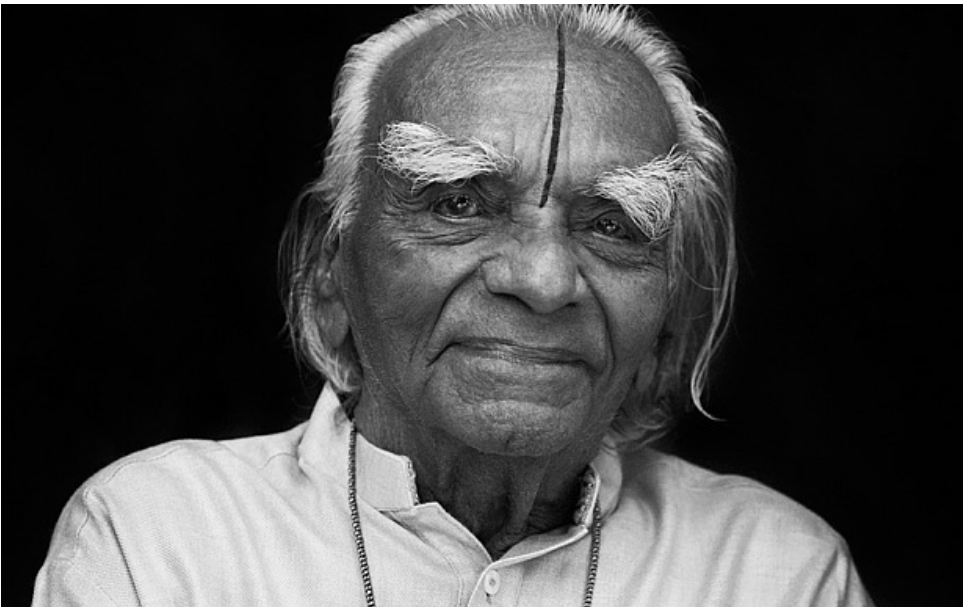
"The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him – that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free." – Vivekananda



"To awaken spiritual unity and to spread to others the love that is our inherent nature is the true goal of human life." — Amma



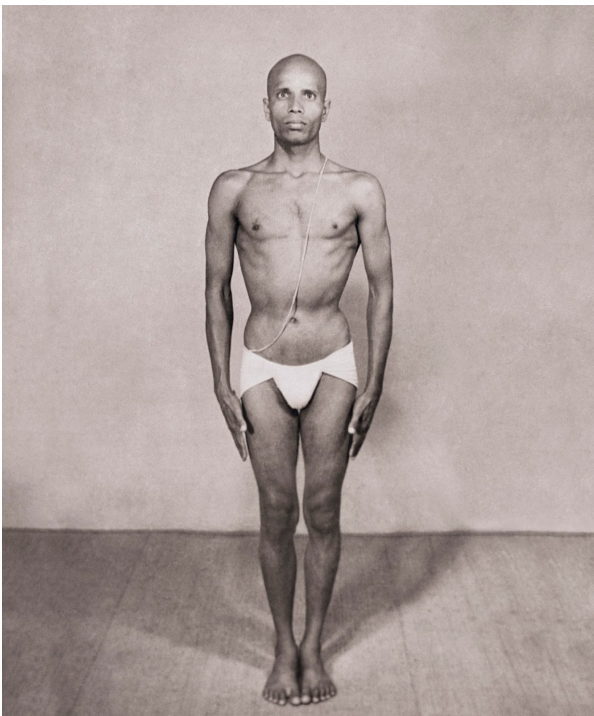
“My life is my message.” – **Mahatma Ghandi**



“Yoga is like music: the rhythm of the body, the melody of the mind, and the harmony of the soul create the symphony of life.” – BKS Iyengar



“In recommending Yoga practices, teachers should always consider an individual’s particular circumstances. Just as other activities and practices must be adapted to the changes in one’s life, such as ageing, so too Yoga practices need to be adapted as the practitioner changes” ~ T Krishnamacharya’s commentary to Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 3



“Do your practice and all is coming.” - Patabhi Jois

History of Yoga

It is quite uncertain when precisely the yoga tradition began. Still, according to the Rig Veda, the first population practicing concepts such as ahimsa, meditation, and surrendering to the supreme was first found in the northern part of India, where the denominated people of the Indu- Saraswati used to live. This civilization was said to be living close to where the Saraswati River used to flow before it disappeared due to heavy droughts, leading to massive migration into the river banks along the side of the sites known as Harrapa and Mohenjo Daro.

Therefore, we will refer to this first group of yoga practitioners as the Harrapan Civilization, who have (believable) pioneered techniques such as asana and meditation from the evidence of ancient sculptures depicting yogis practicing advanced postures such as bhadrasana and engaged in shambavi mudra (half gaze).

People believe this civilization has inhabited these lands around 3900 – 1500 bc. It shows a group of people who had no apparent leader and had lived over 2000 years without any trace of violence until the Aryan Invasions. It is believable that it was part of a matriarchal society, hence the place that gave its origins to Samkhya Philosophy, as expounded by Kapila Deva in later centuries.

This led to a classical era where yoga found its most primitive literature in a set of books containing a detailed and specific collection of hymns, aphorisms, rituals, and commentaries known as the Vedas. The word Veda means “to know, or body of knowledge,” and the origin of these scriptures is said to be within the nature of “sruti,” or that which is revealed by a supernatural force into the awareness of a rishi or saint through deep states of meditation.

The first of these books and the most prominent one is known as the Rig Veda (1500 – 1200 bc), composed of several hymns, and then followed by the Sama Veda (rituals), Yajur Veda (sacrifices), and finally the Atharva Veda (celebrating the divine), around 1200 – 900 bc.

This body of knowledge has been compiled and passed on into a written form by the great compiler known as Vyasa. The father of the Vedas.

Later on, as an extension of this literature, the Upanishads appeared, fitting into what is known as Vedanta or later part of the Vedas, where the relationship between Atman (individual soul) and Brahman (universal consciousness) are exposed.

As part of Vyasa's later books, we have the epic narration of the war on the Kurushetra battlefield known as the Bhagavad Gita, which is the most renowned chapter or song within the larger story of the Mahabharata. This Great Song or Gita is said to be “sruti” and “smriti,” which means a story that has been remembered since it's based on a historical account. Many instructions about the nature and the performance of Yoga are given in this book. But it was not until the writing of the Patanjali Sutras (500- 400 bc) that an exclusive yoga-centered masterpiece was brought into existence, naming the definition of yoga, its obstacles, and the way to overcome them. Inspired by this evolution of events, traditional schools such as Buddhism, tantra, and hatha emerged.



Intro to The vedas

- Rig Veda
- Yajur Veda
- Sama Veda

“Each of the three major vedas teach yogic practice. The Rig veda is the foundation of mantra yoga, the Yajur veda presents prana yoga and the Sama veda has more representation of Dhyana yoga. The fourth veda also presents mantra yoga. Vedanta relates with yoga as our consciousness relates to our form or the blue print relates to the building. Both are fully experienced in

samadhi in which the goal of yogic union is achieved and one accesses the akashic knowledge of the vedas.” - Basti

4 Upavedas

- Ayurveda - medicine
- Dhanur Veda - martial arts
- Sthapatya veda - geomancy and architecture
- ghandarva veda - music and arts

“The four upavedas present deeper practices for certain aspects of vedic knowledge. They are Ayurveda (medicine), Dhanur Veda (martial arts), Sthapatya veda (geomancy and architecture) and ghandarva veda (music and arts).

“Ayurveda, the art of living or science of longevity, is closely related to Dhanurveda, the art of martial forms. Both of these practices hold deep knowledge on the nature of marma points and nadi channels in the body. Dhanurveda incorporates aspects of Ayurveda in order to treat fighters that have been injured and for the fighters to lead a healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet. Agni Karma in Ayurveda shows a more aggressive form of therapy applying burns along certain channels in order to treat pain and difficulty walking. This ayurvedic practice certainly utilizes knowledge that is part of Dhanurveda as well.” ~ Basti

Vedangas

- Jyotish – Vedic astrology
- Kalpa – Rules of ritual
- Shiksha – Pronunciation
- Vyakarana – Grammar
- Nirukta – Etymology
- Chhandas - Meters

“The vedangas are the limbs of the vedas which are used utilized in order to analyze the scripture. The primary vedanga is jyotish or vedic astrology which helps in showing proper timing for effective action. The other vedanga, kalpa shows the rules of ritual and helps in the propitiation of celestial bodies. The other four vedangas relate to aspects of mantra as, pronunciation or shiksha, grammar or vyakarana, etymology or nirukta and meters or chhandas.” ~ basti

Shad Darshanas

- Nyaya – logic school
- Visheshika – atomic school
- Kapila – cosmic school
- Hiranyagarbha – yoga school
- Jaimini – ritualistic school
- Badarayana – metaphysical school

The Main Branches of Yoga – Vamadeva Shastri

There are several main yogic approaches which constitute the different branches of Yoga. While these can be classified in several ways, the following is a good basic scheme to follow. Note that the correlations given are just a few indications, not an exhaustive list.

1. Yoga of Knowledge or Jnana Yoga

Definition	Consists of the development of Self-knowledge and Self-realization through concentration, discrimination, self-inquiry and meditation
Main Traditions	Advaita or non-dualistic Vedanta, Monistic Shaivism, Monistic Shaktism
Prime Texts	Upanishads, works of Shankara (including his commentaries on the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Brahma Sutras) and shorter works like Vivekachudamani, various Advaitic works like Yoga Vasishta, Tripura Rahasya, Ashtavakra Samhita, Avadhuta Gita
Modern Teachers	Ramana Maharshi, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Shivananda of Rishikesh, Swami Rama Tirtha, Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Dayananda

2. Yoga of Devotion or Bhakti Yoga

Definition	Consists of the development of Divine love through surrender to God, service (seva), ritual (puja), chanting, mantra (recitation of Divine Names) and devotional meditation
Main Traditions	Vaishnavism (Krishna and Rama), Shaivism, Shaktism, Swami Narayan
Prime Texts	<i>Narada Bhakti Sutras</i> , <i>Shandilya Bhakti Sutras</i> , <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> , <i>Srimad Bhagavatam</i> , <i>Ramayana</i> , <i>Puranas</i> , works of Bhakti teachers like Ramanuja, Madhva, Chaitanya, Tulsidas, Mira Bai, and Ram Prasad
Modern Teachers	Ammachi, Prabhupada (ISKCON), Yogananda, Anandamayi Ma, Sri Aurobindo, Sri Ramakrishna, Papa Ramda

3. Yoga of Action or Karma Yoga

Definition	Consists of service (seva) to living creatures or ritual worship (puja, yajna) of the Divine, healing work, teaching work, political action for the betterment of society
Main Traditions	Much like Bhakti Yoga
Prime texts	<i>Bhagavad Gita</i> , <i>Puranas</i> , <i>Manu Smriti</i> , Other Dharma Sutras, Puja books
Modern teachers	Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, B.G. Tilak, Pandurang Shastri Athavale

4. Hatha Yoga or Yoga of Psycho-physical Techniques

Definition	Consists of Asana, Pranayama and meditation to prepare the body and mind for higher Yoga practices, including awakening of the Kundalini
Main Traditions	Nath Yoga, Modern traditions and western Yoga
Prime Texts	Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gherunda Samhita, Shiva Samhita
Modern Teachers	Krishnamacharya, BKS Iyengar, Pattabhi Jois, TKV Desikachar, Swami Vishnudevananda, Swami Satchidananda, Amrit Desai, Kripalu Yoga

5. Integral, Raja Yoga or Eightfold Ashtanga Yoga

Definition	Consists of all eight limbs of Yoga but as focused on concentration, meditation and Samadhi. Combines Jnana, Bhakti, Hatha and Karma into an integral approach
Main Traditions	<i>Yoga Sutras</i> , Siddha Yoga, Nath Yoga,
Prime Texts	Yoga Sutras and Commentaries, Vasishta Samhita, Brihat Yogi Yajnavalkya Smriti, Yoga Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita
Teachers	Swami Shivananda, Yogananda, Sri Aurobindo, Swami Muktananda, Swami Satchidananda.

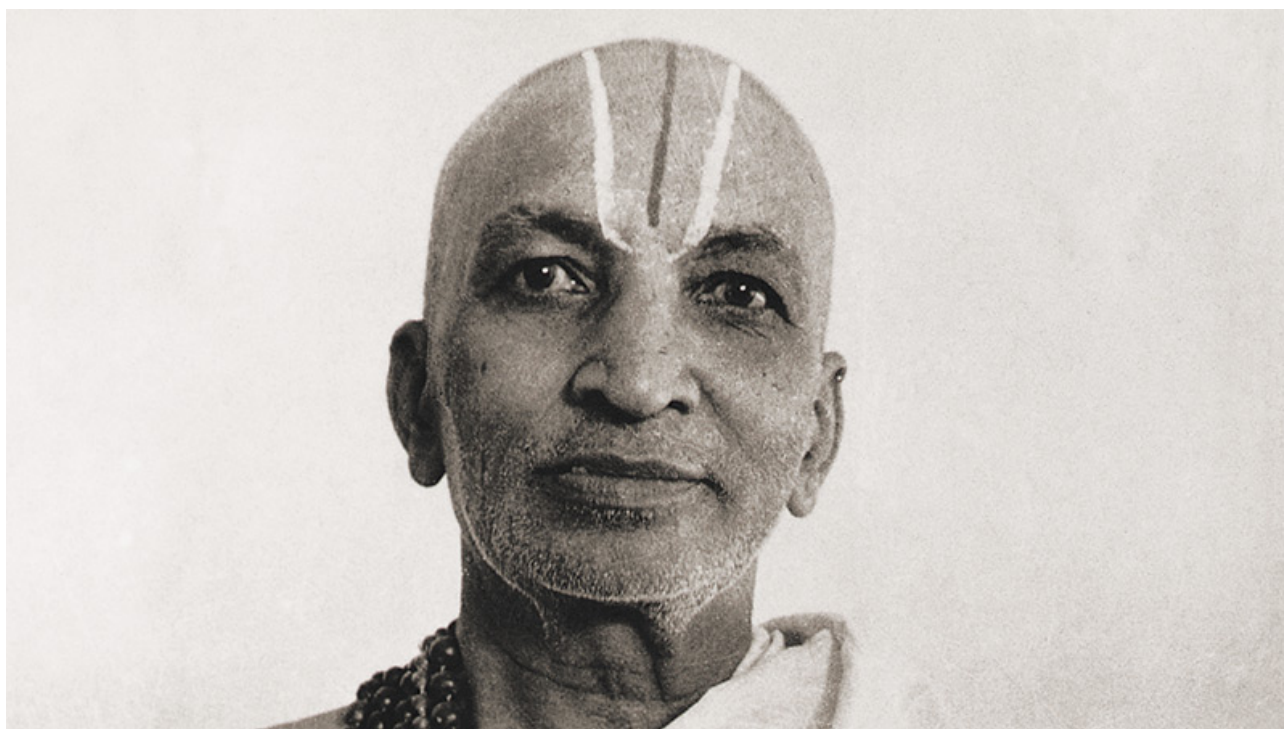
Other Traditional Yoga Approaches – By Vamadeva Shastri

1. **Mantra Yoga** Using mantras or sacred sounds. These usually accompany all other Yoga approaches, particularly Bhakti Yoga. There are many works on Mantra Yoga and both Vedic and Tantric approaches to it (particularly the works of Kashmiri Shaivism). Great teachers include Abhinavagupta, Bhartrihari and Sri Aurobindo. These in turn rest their teachings on older Vedic texts, which are regarded as a treasure house of mantras. Mantra is a key component of all yogic paths.
2. **Laya Yoga** Listening to the inner sounds or Nada. This often goes along with Mantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga or with devotional music. There are few specific works on this topic but it is mentioned in most yogic texts. Certain groups like Surat Shabda Yoga (Radha Soami) emphasize this method but it is common in all Yoga traditions and often used by musicians as well.
3. **Tantric Yoga** Emphasizes the use of deities, mantras (Divine names), yantras, and Tantras (inner teachings). Tantric Yoga is a type of Raja Yoga using all eight aspects of Yoga. It emphasizes the worship of the Goddess, including the worship of Sri Chakra, but *Tantras* for all main deities exist as well. Sexual Tantra is but one side of this vast system.
4. There are many Tantric texts like Tantra Loka of Abhinavagupta, Mahanirvana Tantra, Yogini Hridaya Tantra, Devi Bhagavata Purana and Saundarya Lahiri.
5. There are many modern Tantric and Kundalini Yoga groups, both traditional and non-traditional. The Sikh or White Tantra and Kundalini Yoga is a more modern approach taught in the West.
6. **Vedic Yoga** Vedic Yoga is the older energetic approach of the *Vedas*. It has much in common with Tantric Yoga using mantras, rituals, devotion and meditation, but it focuses on Vedic deities like Indra, Agni, Soma and Surya. There has been a revival of such Vedic approaches in modern India including those of the Arya Samaj, Fivefold Path, Sri Aurobindo, Ganapati Muni and my own work in this area.

7. **Ayurvedic Yoga** This is more specifically the Yoga of healing for both body and mind, emphasizing Ayurvedic factors like the doshas, such as examined in this course and by other modern Ayurvedic teachers. These teachings are scattered in both traditional Ayurvedic and Yogic texts.

Generally all Yoga follows an integral approach and applies a variety of these aspects and their methods, either in a stage by stage process or as part of a comprehensive practice. The idea behind such integral Yogas is that it is best to have a Yoga practice that addresses all parts of our nature from body to pure consciousness.

Krishnamacharya



Tirumalai Krishnamacharya (November 18, 1888 – February 28, 1989) was an Indian yoga teacher, ayurvedic healer and scholar.

Often referred to as "The Father of Modern Yoga," Krishnamacharya is widely regarded as one of the most influential yoga teachers of the 20th century and is credited with the revival of hatha yoga.

Krishnamacharya held degrees in all the six Vedic darśanas, or Indian philosophies. While under the patronage of the King of Mysore, Krishna Raja Wadiyar IV, Krishnamacharya traveled around India giving lectures and demonstrations to promote yoga, including such feats as stopping his heartbeat. He is widely considered as the architect of vinyāsa, in the sense of combining breathing with movement. Once a person began seeing Krishnamacharya, he would work with him or her on a number of levels including adjusting their diet; creating herbal medicines; and setting up a series of yoga postures that would be most beneficial. When instructing a person on the practice of yoga, Krishnamacharya particularly stressed the importance of combining breath work (pranayama) with the postures (asanas) of yoga and meditation (dhyana) to reach the desired goal. He would continue to see the person approximately once a week to monitor the progress until he or she was healed. In *The Yoga Tradition of the Mysore Palace*, Norman Sjoman asserts that Krishnamacharya was influenced by the *Sritattvanidhi* and also the *Vyayama Dipika*, a Western-based gymnastics manual written by the Mysore Palace gymnasts.

Colonialized change

In the late 18th and early 19th century, the British began to pursue policies of conciliation towards the native culture of India. As a result of this policy, many Indian and European administrators, intellectuals, and public officials began supporting the creation of a new, modern India that combined the best of what modernity and the West had to offer, but in a traditional, Indian form. Years of colonial rule had resulted in numerous stereotypes of Indian effeminacy and degeneracy narratives that implied Indians were physically and racially degraded—in other words, inferior to whites. Re-appropriating hatha yoga became part of a larger project of Indian nation building and the construction of the new Indian man designed to combat these stereotypes. ~ Amara Miller



“At the time fitness and exercise regimes known as “physical culture” were quite popular in the West and, as a result of colonial influence, in India. Physical culture was based in body building practices, gymnastics (which at this point in history was male-dominated), and military calisthenics. Because of its emphasis on manliness and cultivating the body it was generally viewed as a way to regenerate moral and physical mettle of India and its people (read: men). Traditional hatha yoga practices were re-appropriated and combined with modern physical culture in an attempt to meld “indigenous” Indian exercises

with more Western practices and ideals. Thus, a new, more aerobic and acrobatic version of yoga was born that was devoid of any of the negative associations of earlier centuries.” ~ Amara Miller

Swedish gymnastics being performed at the Stockholm Olympics in 1912



Russian army (circa 1910) performing Swedish gymnastics as part of military calisthenics



Colonialized Yoga

“This new, reinvented form of yoga had more in common with body building, gymnastics, and military calisthenics than traditional yoga practices. But because it was combined with a few “acceptable” hatha yoga practices, and had

the label “yoga” attached, it was seen as part of the cultural heritage of India and used to promote a new image of the modern, strong, and masculine Indian body as well as a modern, independent India. As such, modern postural yoga cannot be separated from Colonialism.” ~ Amara Miller

Modern Postural Yoga

Modern postural yoga and most of the poses we practice today are only around 100 years old. One of the most influential figures in the development of modern yoga, T. Krishnamacharya (1888-1989), was deeply embedded in physical culture. His financial backer, the maharajah of Mysore, was a physical culture enthusiast, and many of the teachers he was connected to or the students he would later teach came from similar fitness backgrounds.

The result was a new formulation of yoga that was a marriage of body building, gymnastics, military calisthenics, and those hatha yoga practices that were deemed acceptable. It was this new form of yoga that was taught to some of the most influential global yoga teachers of the 20th century: B.K.S. Iyengar, K. Pattabhi Jois, Indra Devi, and T.K.V. Desikachar. It was this new physically-orientated, acrobatic form that would later migrate to the West, a yoga nearly devoid of any spiritual or meditative practice.

Headstand (Persian: akucchan)

1600-1604 from a manuscript of Bahr al-hayat (Ocean of Life)



**Female Deer
Shaman –
Costa Rica
500BCE - 300CE**

Yoga Dharma - A spiritual path

“Yoga Dharma is a practical system devised to help unfold our highest human potential of Self-realization, which is the realization of our true nature as pure consciousness (the Atman or Purusha) beyond both body and mind. Yoga Dharma is the main practical approach of Moksha Dharma or the seeking of liberation, the freedom of the spirit, which is the highest goal of life. Yoga Dharma, therefore, we could say, is the highest of the Dharmas.” – David Frawley

Yoga Dharma, the right application of the body and mind, is applicable in all areas of one’s life through individual Dharma or vocation, the pursuit of legitimate wealth (artha) and legitimate enjoyment (kama). For these lesser goals of life to be yogic, they should be pursued in service and without causing harm.

“Dharma: “Bearer”; a term signifying “law”, “virtue”, “righteousness” and “duty”. Bearer and upholder of the laws, both divine and worldly; duty to participate in the divine plan for humankind's higher evolution.” ~ Dharma Mitra

Yoga is deeply interwoven with all other Vedic sciences including Ayurveda, Vedic astrology, Vastu (Vedic architecture and design) and Sanskrit.

Yoga dharma teaches us the universal dharma, the great laws of the universe, which are formulated as various truth principles.

The 24 Tattvas, or truth principles, are the foundation of the Samkhya philosophy of creation. Samkyha maps the expansion of the many (prakriti) from the one (purusha). Samkyha also shows us the path to merge our consciousness with the original source.

Traditional Schools of Yoga

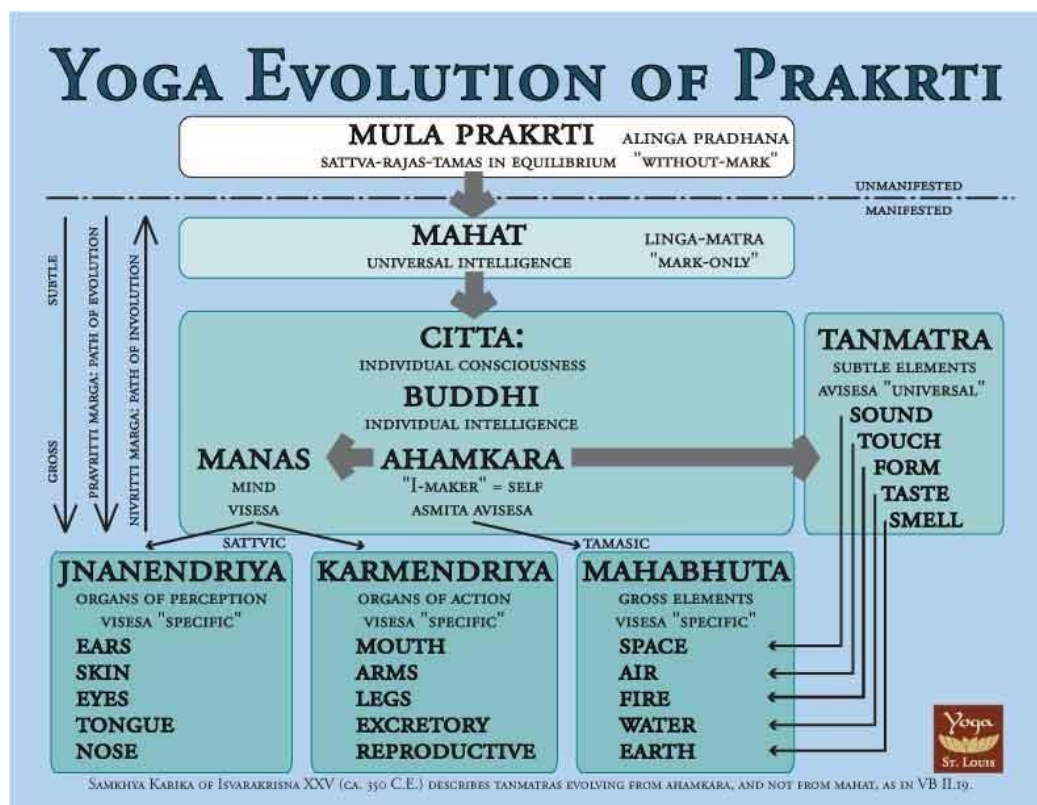
In the beginning, the first approach towards an explanation of the natural order and appearance of things was given by Samkhya Yoga, Which made a distinction between the elements that compose the world, mind & body without a divine conception.

It proposed that material nature or PRAKRTI was animated by PURUSA, the universal psychic principle by which the three GUNAS or modalities of nature could create the condition for the fluctuation of Chitta or Consciousness.

Prakriti consists of five elements: Earth, water, fire, air, and ether. These give origin to smell, taste, form, touch, and sound.

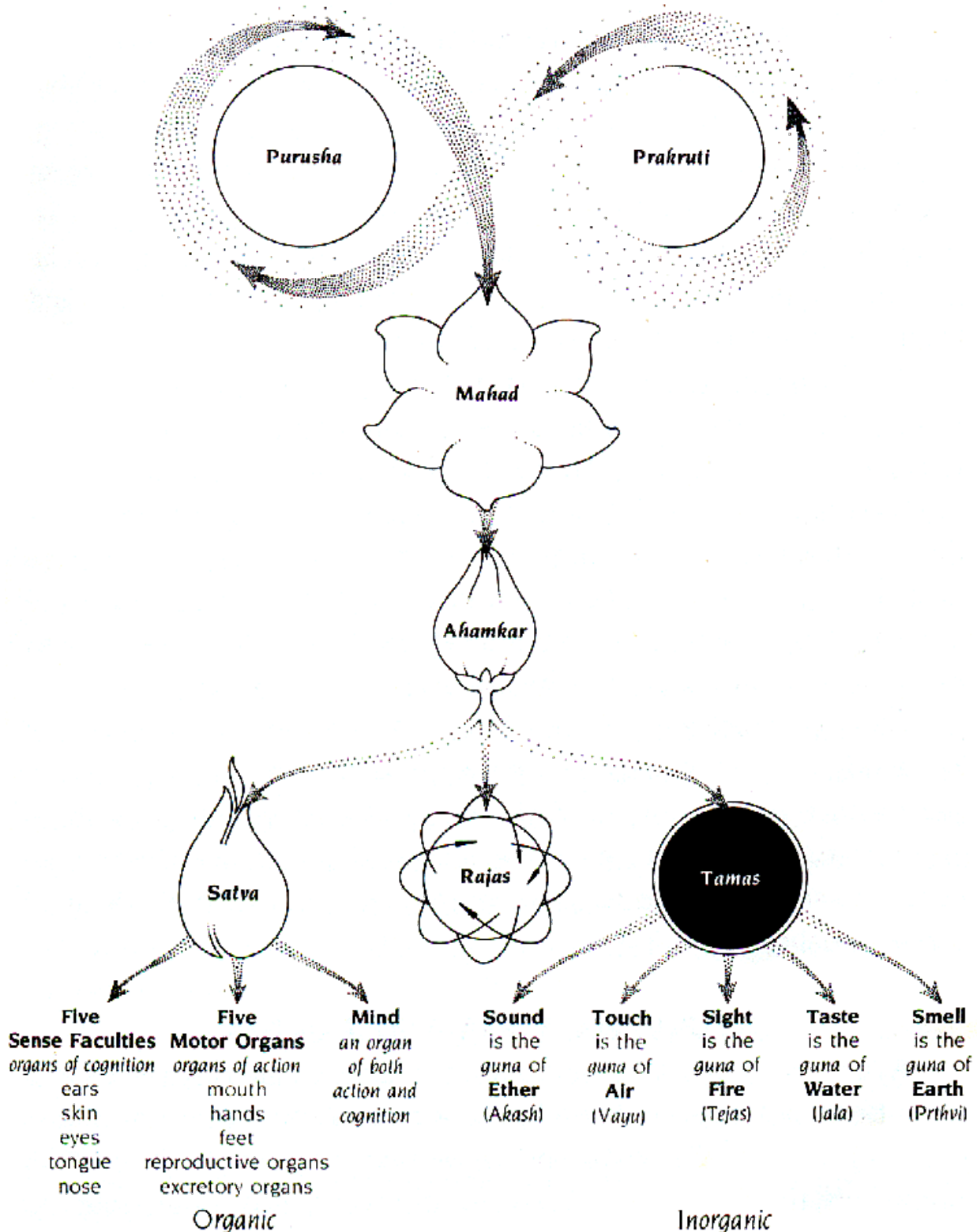
The interaction of these elements with the three Gunas, namely: Satva, Rajas, and Tamas, gave origin to the activation of the Ego, Intellect, and mind. These arise from the five organs of perception (jnanendriyas): ears, nose, tongue, eyes, and skin, and the five senses of action (karmendriyas): legs, arms, speech, excretory and reproductive organs.

Prakriti, the five gross elements, the five subtle counterparts, the ego, intellect, mind, organs of perceptions, organs of action, and Purusa make up the 25 elements or Tattvas of Samkhya Philosophy.



Samkhya Philosophy of Creation

Purusha is unmanifested, formless, passive, beyond attributes, beyond cause and effect, space and time. **Purusha** is Pure Existence. **Prakruti** is the creative force of action, the source of form, manifestation, attributes and nature. **Mahad** is the Cosmic Intelligence or **Buddhi**. **Ahamkar** is ego, the sense of "I am." **Satva** is stability, pure aspect, awakening, essence and light. **Rajas** is dynamic movement. **Tamas** is static. It is potential energy, inertia, darkness, ignorance and matter.



Hatha Yoga

Unlike the common belief that this school is part of ancient teachings, its original primary text, the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, written by Swami Swatmarama, is no more than a hundred years old.

In this fourteenth-century text and along the lines of other significant texts known as the Shiva Samhita, their basic proposal is to harmonize the subtle body and the energies within our gross physical bodies. This is being done through the inner practices of shatkarma to unblock the nadis, subtle energy channels, to let the prana or vital energy flow in a state of harmony and an energetically balanced manner.

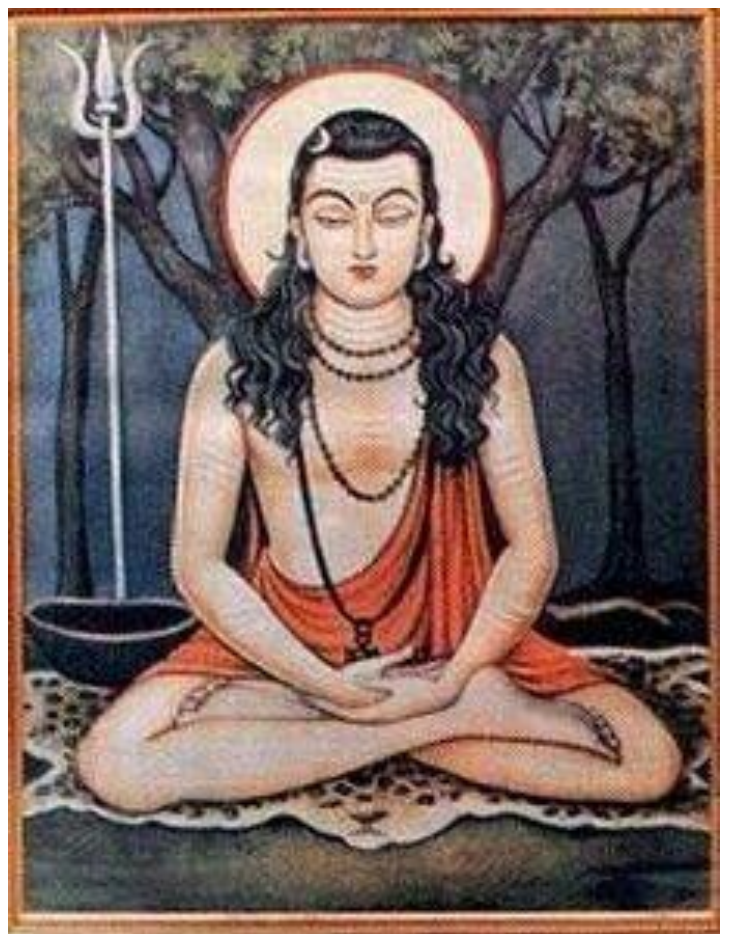
The shatkarma being the first step in the hatha yoga practice, consists of Dhauti (internal cleansing), Basti (yogic enema), Neti (nasal cleansing), trataka (concentrated gazing), nauli (abdominal massage), and Kapalabhati (brain cleansing).

These techniques are followed by asana for strength, mudra for steadiness, pratyahara for calmness, pranayama for lightness, dhyana for realization, and samadhi for attaining bliss.

This lineage emerged from a direct parampara or disciplic line starting with Adi Nath (also known as Shiva), who shared the teaching with Goraknath, who in turn passed it to Matsyendranath, which was the direct teacher of swami Swatmarama, who wrote its most prominent and representative work known as the Hatha Yoga Pradipika.

Revising all hatha-related texts, we find no more than 40 asanas or yoga postures, which may vary slightly from one another, but differ far from the world of form and specialization of modern yoga. Most modern schools nowadays have found their inspiration in the Hatha Yoga proposals but moved away from its original purpose focusing more on the outward appearance of the practice.





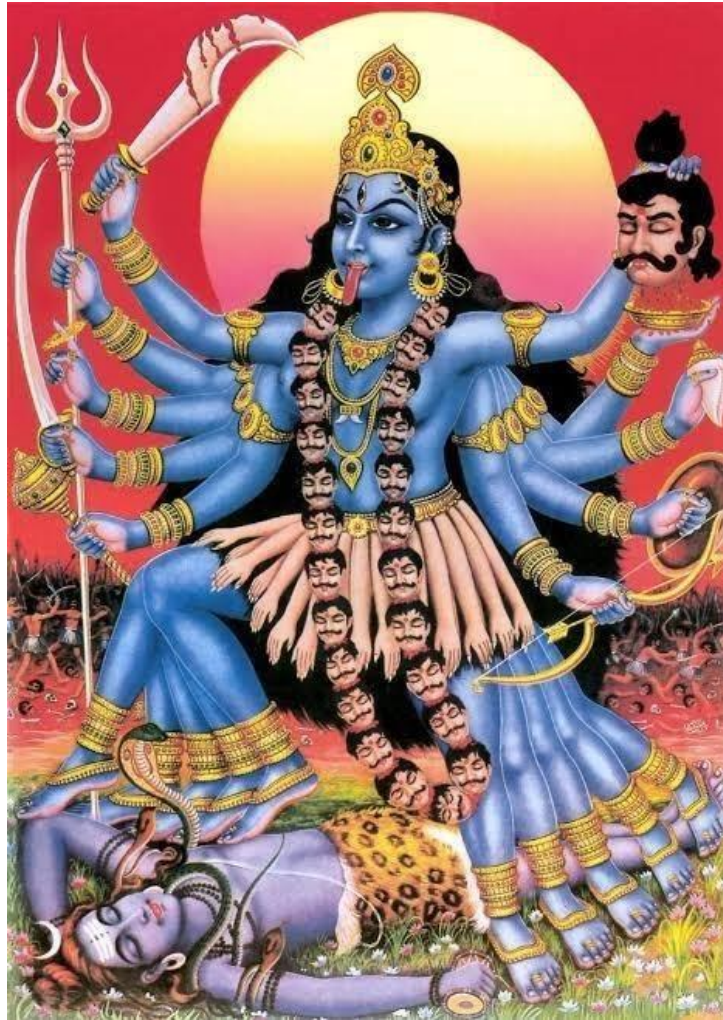
The Tantric Path

It arose from the broad influence of Mahayana Buddhism and as a reaction to a long dualistic tradition sprouting from the Vedas, where spirit and matter had always been portrayed in a contradictory opposition rather than complementary composition. The tantric path offered a way to see the experience of the divine within the sensory experimentation of our phenomenological universe. Including daily life experiences and ordinary or mundane activities as a platform to enhance our subtle bodies, manifest the unconscious, and celebrate through its integrative practices the miracle of life.

The word tantra can be understood from the interpretation of its roots as an expansive whole, recognizing the entire fabric of existence as an expression of the divine feminine, or Shakti Energy. There are diverse methods to engage with this philosophy beyond the common assumption of it being an introduction to sacred sexuality.

These methods can be divided into a mantra, yantra, and puja. Performing these techniques enables the practitioner to become aware of its inner potency, increase devotion towards female deities such as Kali or Durga, and the eventual dissolution of its male egoic consciousness.

Rather than stilling the mind and taming the input of the senses, texts such as the Spanda Karika and Vijnana Bhairava encouraged practitioners to let go of the dual distinction between that which is pure or impure, divine or mundane. To integrate the fact that both these realities, Shiva and Shakti are one within the body, mind, and breath.



Bhakti yoga

“Joy is the proof that god has answered his devotee.”

– Paramahansa Yogananda

“Prayer in yoga and ayurveda brings a direct experience of devotion. Devotion or Bhakti brings a very healing sensation and tends to calm the spirit and bring joy. Prayer can take many forms such as the recitation of mantras or hymns and the burning of sacred resins. Prayer can be made to the deva's, the shaktis, the planets or the plants and animals.

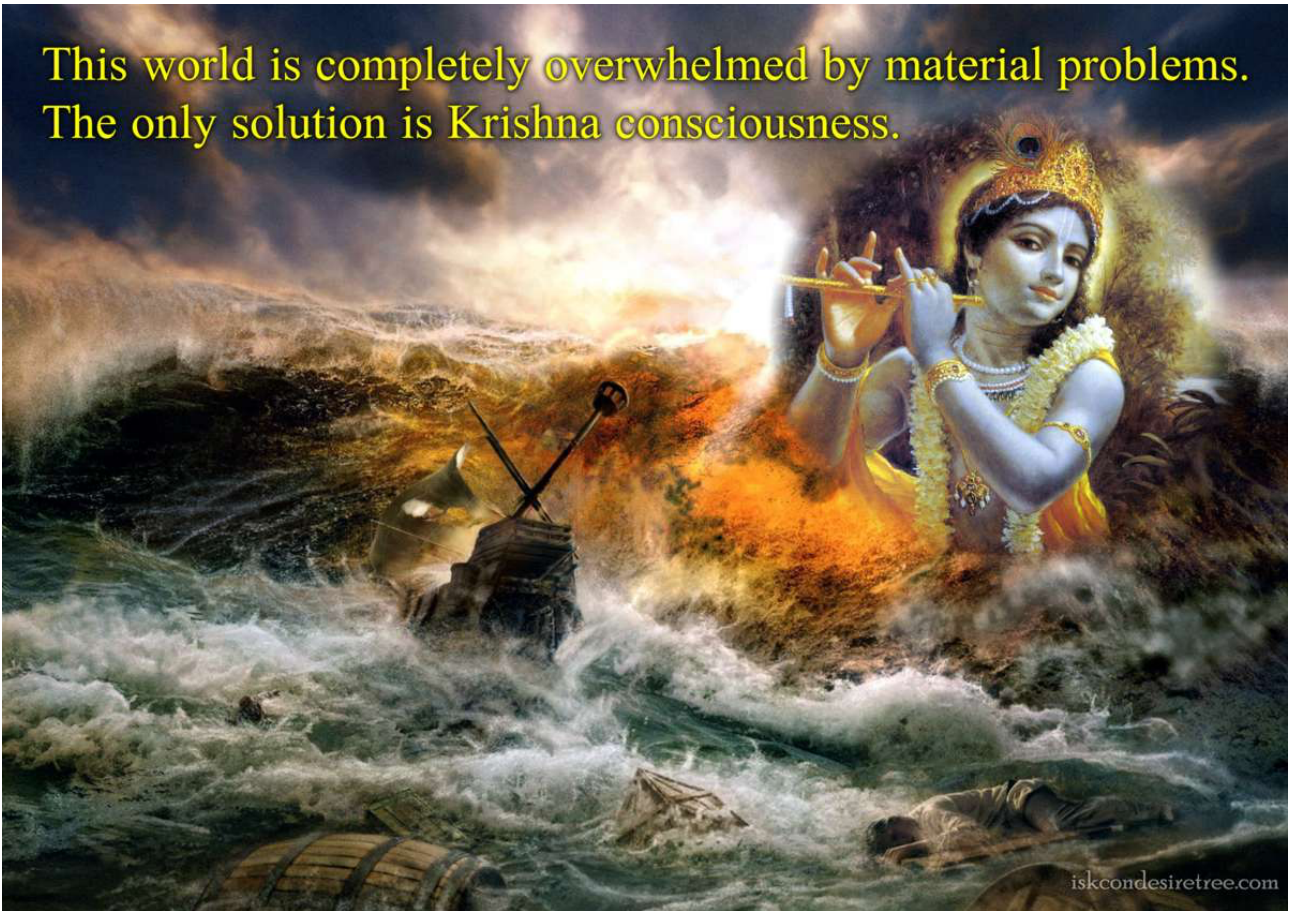
The many forms of shakti have special intricate prayers with particular intended functions. Through prayer upon a sacred theme, symbol, object, deva or shakti, we can change our ego based intentions tied to a physical circumstance, into an archetypal form of intention and group prayer. This helps to keep our energies safe and our intentions pure. This practice is similar to Reiki which uses meditation symbols to direct intention while remaining unattached to the outcome in the future.” - Sebastian

A.C. Bhaktivedanta — Swami Prabhupada



Probably the most successful proponent of Bhakti in the west, Prabhupada and his organization have now spread krishna consciousness to every corner of the globe.

This world is completely overwhelmed by material problems.
The only solution is Krishna consciousness.



Krishna is an incarnation of Visnu. Krishna's consort is Radha who is an aspect of Laxmi. One can clearly see the preservational blessing of Visnu as culture is upheld by this Sangha. The abundance of Laxmi is also clearly seen in the wealth and beauty surrounding Krishna in holy sites like Vrindavan.



The Appearance of Divinity

The earliest writing about Yoga and its relation with a supreme order appears in The Vedas (4000 BC). Here the idea of yoking the mind with the nature of the divine, producing a pure state of consciousness and the dissolution of the ego is first mentioned.

According to the Vedic Teachings, a form of Vishnu or God manifested a Lotus flower from his belly where Brahma, the architect of the universe, first appeared. Vishnu, overwhelmed by the universe's vast darkness and didn't know what to do, having nothing to grasp, decided to come under a state of meditation for around a thousand years. From that, the word TAPASYA came into manifestation from the cosmic consciousness. Realizing that by performing such austerities, fundamental knowledge about the self and further instructions would be granted, he continued with his penance, bearing the fruit for the creation of the universe as the appearance of the Pranava and the Gayatri Mantra came into existence.

OM BHUR BHUVA
SVAH TAT SAVITUR
VARENYAM BARGO
DEVASYA DHIMAH
DHIYO YONAH PRACHODAYAT

The balance of life is found through the coming and going of nature. I bow to the essential nature that permeates existence. May we all perceive the brilliance of enlightenment within our existence through the subtle and active state of our intellect.

Main Hindu Gods & Goddesses

THE TRIMURTI (Hindu Trinity):

SHAKTIS (female aspects):



Brahma

The Creator

Vehicle: swan

has 4 heads, 4 arms, and a reddish complexion

not commonly worshipped; not to be confused with Brahman (the ground of all being) or the Brahmin (priestly caste)

Saraswati

Goddess of knowledge, music, and the arts

Vehicle: swan

wife of Brahma

sits on a white lotus playing a veena



Vishnu

The Preserver

Vehicle: garuda (bird)

has 4 arms, a blueish complexion, and rests on a snake

was incarnated (born as an animal or human) nine times with one more still to come; is the main god of **Vaishnavism**

Lakshmi

Goddess of wealth and prosperity

Vehicle: owl

wife of Vishnu

usually shown bestowing coins and flanked by elephants



Shiva

The Destroyer / Transformer

Vehicle: bull

has matted hair, a third eye, a blue throat and a trident in his hand

often worshipped in the featureless lingam form; is the main god of **Saivism**

Parvati

The Divine Mother

Vehicle: lion

the reincarnation of Shiva's first wife

has many forms, such as the popular Durga and Kali (see below); often shown together with Saraswati and Lakshmi as the **tridevi** ('triple goddess')



Yoga Lineages

Yoga Darshana Lineage

There are many Vedic lineages recognizing different sources of Yoga

- – Hiranyagharba
- – The sun Aditya
- – The sun god, Manu
- – Shiva in the form of Adi Nath
- – Krishna or Narayan



Hiranyagharba lineage

Hiranyagarbha is the creative aspect of Brahma and is cited in the Puranas and the Mahabharata as the source of yoga.



Hiranyagarbha passed the knowledge of yoga onto **Sage Vasishtha**. Vasishtha is credited as the chief author of Mandala 7 of the Rigveda. Vasishtha in Hindu mythology is one of the Saptarishis (Seven Great Sages Rishi). Sage Vasishtha is considered to be a Brahmarshi, i.e. a sage with full Brahma Jnana, knowledge of the self. Patanjali is a later figure in the Vasishtha family.



Parasara was raised by his grandfather Vasishtha as he lost his father at an early age. Legend has it that his father, Shaktimuni, was on a journey once when he came across an angry Rakshasa. This demon devoured Parasara's father. This episode greatly angered Parasara and in order to take revenge his father's death; he commenced a sacrifice to effect the destruction of all the Rakshasas. Parasara has been instrumental in laying down the foundations of Indian Vedic astrology by means of the Brihat Parasara Hora Sastra. The Sanskrit in which it is composed dates back to the 7th or 8th centuries CE. He has authored a number of verses in the Rig Veda. Sage Parasara has also written the Parasara Smriti, which is a code of laws said to be applicable for the present age of Kaliyug. He is the speaker of the

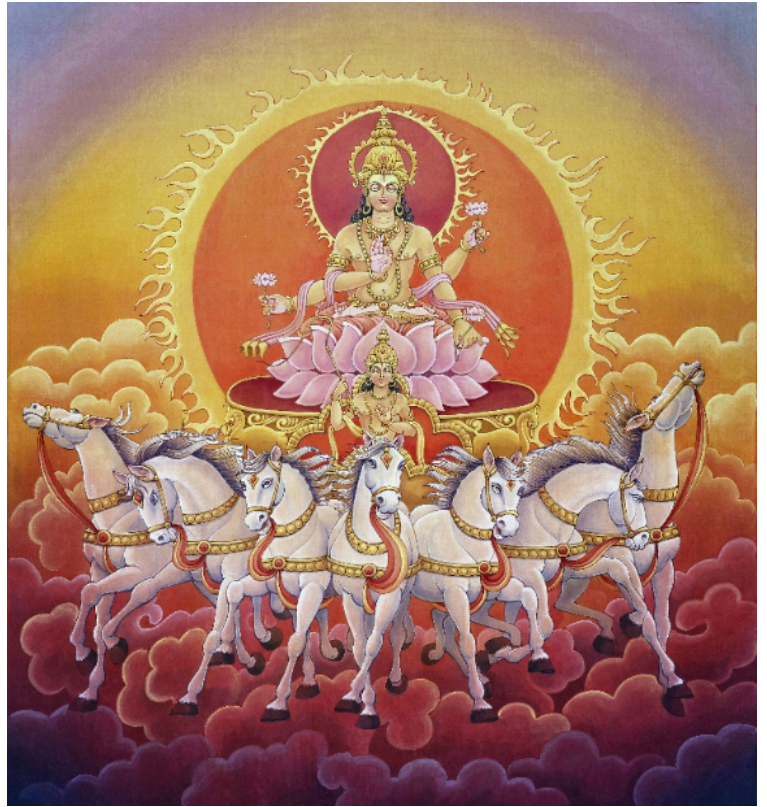
Vishnu Purana, considered by scholars to be one of the earliest puranas.

Parasara is also said to be the speaker of the Vrksayurveda or the science of trees. It is one of the earliest texts on botany, considered to be an ancient botany primer for the students of Traditional Indian Medicine.



Parasara went on to father a son, **Ved Vyasa**, with the maiden Satyawati, the daughter of a ferryman. Vyasa carried forward his father's literary legacy and went on to become a very famous sage and writer. He has written 18 Puranas and is most widely known for having authored the Mahabharata.

Aditya Lineage



One of his names is Aditya meaning first born and also Surya. He is also called Bhutasya Jatah (creator or father of all bhutas that is, matter from which objects assume form). He is the ruler of all the planets. The Sun represents the male or father principle.

Yajnavalkya hails supreme among sages of sacred memory. Yajnavalkya said, "Prostration to the glorious Aditya, who in the form of the Atman, abides in all beings. I bow to Him who surrounds all like Akasa, who is one and not separated or distanced by limiting conditions. O Great God, O Creator, I contemplate upon that glowing sphere which lights and warms the whole world! O God who burns all miseries wrought by unrighteous activities, who burns ignorance which is the seed of activity! O Lord, I worship Thy lotus-like feet praised and worshipped by the rulers of the three worlds. Give me those portions of the Veda which are not known to others". Yajnavalkya wrote sections of the yajur veda. He married two wives.

Manu Lineage

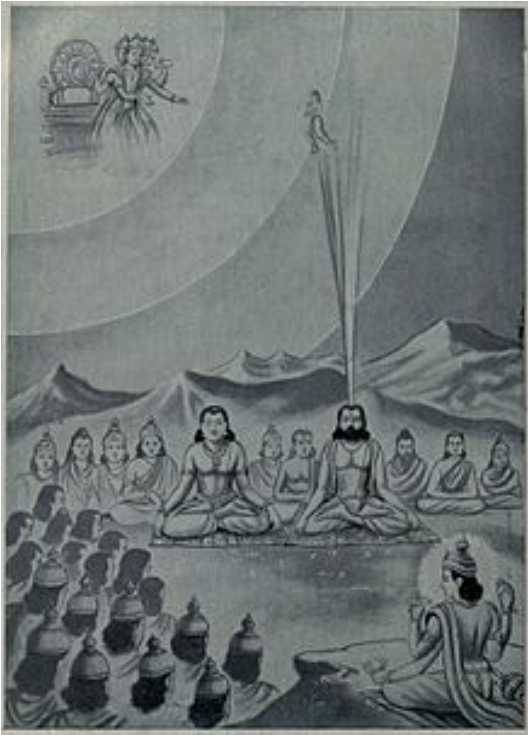


Manu is the progenitor of humanity, who appears in the world at the start of a new kalpa (aeon), after universal destruction.

Shraddhadeva Manu was the king of the Dravida Kingdom before the great flood. Forewarned about the flood by the matsya avatar of Vishnu, he saved the humanity by building a boat that carried his family and the saptarishi to safety.

The Mahabharata states:

“And Manu was endowed with great wisdom and devoted to virtue. And he became the progenitor of a line. And in Manu's race have been born all human beings, who have, therefore, been called *Manavas*. And it is of Manu that all men including Brahmanas, Kshattriyas, and others have been descended, and are therefore all called Manavas.”



Ikshvaku – from Sanskrit Isku, meaning, “sugar cane”, was the first king of the Ikshvaku dynasty in ancient India. He is remembered as a righteous and glorious king of the Kosala Kingdom, known as Oudh.

Krishna has been a yoga teacher for many lifetimes and was the original teacher of the sun god vivasvan. In the Gita he has accessed his Kaivalya state and is able to share this knowledge as the supreme cosmic lord due to his direct merging with purusha. Though worshipping krisna may seem religious or disempowering, it truly is the

recognition of our unified love for devotion and the joy that interpersonal exchange holds. We are the unified creator as a manifestation looking back upon itself as another manifestation. This whole devotional process of loving an external being brings us back to self love and our acceptance of our own sacredness.



Shiva Lineage



Adinath or Adi Natha is a Sanskrit word meaning, “first lord”. Shiva is an Ascetic, Yogi, Mystic, Lover, Householder and Demon Slayer.

Shiva is worshipped as time itself and the infinite unchangeable being. Shiva’s partner is Parvati. Shiva has many forms with his dreadlocks adorned with a crescent moon, a serpent around his neck, a trident or trishula in his hand, his third eye radiant, the Ganges river flowing from his hair and a damaru drum in hand. Shiva is also recognized as the force of destruction.

Shiva is known for his infinite willpower and powerful yogic practice and tapas.

“O Shiva, what is your reality?
What is this wonder-filled universe?
What constitutes seed?
Who centers the universal wheel?
What is this life beyond form
pervading forms?
How may we enter it fully,
above space and time,
names and descriptions?
Let my doubts be cleared!”

~ Parvati asks Shiva in the Vigyan Bhairav Tantra



Vishnu Lineage



“O ye who wish to gain realization of the Supreme Truth, utter the name of "Vishnu" at least once in the steadfast faith that it will lead you to such realization.”

- Rig Veda, VI.15b.3.

Narayana, meaning the son of man, is the form of Vishnu which is all pervasive. Vishnu is the force of preservation to balance shiva and is merciful and good. Vishnu's partner is Laxmi. Vishnu is called upon to balance and protect the universe when the self-serving, asuric forces take control. When this occurs he embodies on earth as an avatar. There are 10 primary Vishnu avatars that are recognized.

Vishnu is often shown on his cosmic multi-headed serpent vehicle that is named shesha. He often carries a conch shell, mace, lotus and chakra disc and is also known to bring along a bow named sarnga and a sword called nandaka.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF YOGIC PHILOSOPHIES, TEXTS, AND KEY FIGURES

VEDIC

Development of nonduel perspectives and growth of the urban Indus-Sarasvati region of South Asia, birthplace of yoga

PRECLASSICAL (EPIC)

Use of ritualized ceremonies to transcend limitations of the mind

CLASSICAL

Introduction of matter-spirit dualism

POSTCLASSICAL (TANTRIC)

Return to nondualism, sacredness of all experience; emergence of hatha yoga

← BCE

CE →

5000 4000 2000 0 250 500 750 1000 1250 1500 1750 2000

VEDAS

Four books of rituals and hymns in praise of God:
Rig Veda
Sama Veda
Yajur Veda
Atharva Veda

UPANISHADS

Mystic teachings identifying the individual with the entire cosmos

YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

Seminal text describing the eight paths of yoga in four chapters:
Samadhi (Merging with Divine Self)
Sadhana (Creating Spiritual Practice)
Vibhuti (Manifesting Divine Power)
Kaivalya (Cultivating Inner Freedom)

DARSHANAS (PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS)

Six philosophical schools with viewpoints on self and reality:
Yoga (Mind training), Sankhya (Being)
Vedanta (Upanishad-based mysticism), Nyaya (Logic)
Vaisheshika (Atomism), Mimamsa (Rituals)

MAHABHARATA

World's longest epic poem, depicting a sweeping vision of cosmos and humanity

RAMAYANA

Epic poem about the travels of Ram, who lives by rules of dharma, duty to a higher law

BHAGAVAD GITA

Portion of the Mahabharata in which a teacher (Krishna) guides a young warrior (Arjuna) in the ways of karma, jnana, and bhakti yoga

BUDDHA

Founder of Buddhism—"Awakened One" who taught that everyone can become enlightened

KAMA SUTRA

Compendium of advice on cultivating erotic pleasure

GORAKSHA-PADDHATI

A hatha yoga text asserting the existence of 8,400,000 asanas, calling 84 of them useful

HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA

Collection of the first recorded yoga poses, describing sixteen postures

THE GHERANDA SAMHITA

Continuation of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, describing thirty-two poses

TANTRAS

Beliefs promoting enlightenment through personal experience and multiple practices, recorded in:
Shiva Sutras (900 CE)
Tantra-Aloka (1000 CE)
Shiva Samhita (1350 CE)
Mahavirya-Tantra (1750 CE)

FIRST YOGA STUDIO IN AMERICA

Established in Hollywood by Indra Devi

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Mesmerized the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893

SWAMI SIVANANDA

Inspired the establishment of more than thirty yoga centers and ashrams worldwide

KRISHNAMACHARYA

Revived many lost teachings of yoga and instructed numerous modern-day yoga teachers, including:
B.K.S. Iyengar

Emphasizes detailed alignment and therapeutic yoga

TKV. Desikachar

Focuses on individual instruction and breath practices

Pattabhi Jois

Taught structured flow in series of poses, building inner heat

Indra Devi

Spread yoga worldwide with love and warmth

MODERN

Growth of yoga outside India

The Bhagavad Gita

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ AS IT IS



His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

The Bhagavad Gita is taken from a chapter of the epic narration of the Mahabharata, which gives an account of the events leading to the present age of Kali Yuga, almost 5000 years ago. King Bharata, the former ruler of the earth at that time, had two sons: Dhritarashtra and Pandu. The first one was the eldest, but he was born blind at birth, so the younger brother took his place after their father passed away. When Pandu died at a young age, his five children, Yudhishira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva, came under the protection of their blind uncle. The uncle became the King until they were fit to rule the kingdom on behalf of their father.

The sons of Pandu and Dhritarashtra grew up together and were trained in the art of war by their elders, Bhishma and Drona. Duryodhana, the eldest son of the blind King, hated and envied the Pandavas, for they were truly virtuous and always acted accordingly to dharma and had earned the love and respect of their community. They were meant to receive the kingdom back again and rule across the earth, but their life and reputation were constantly threatened by the evil plots of the Kuru Dynasty.

On one of these attempts, the Pandavas were challenged to a feat for a gambling game. Because of their background as Kshatriyas, they could not refuse the challenge. The outcome of this treacherous tournament left the Pandavas without their kingdom and without one of their wives. Draupadi, who was intended to be shamed and dishonored in front of the court by being stripped away from her clothes, was saved by the divine intervention of Krishna, who, by using the power of his Yoga Maya, avoided the disastrous scene.

After being in exile in the forest for thirteen years due to being cheated and defeated by their evil cousins, the Pandavas returned, asking for their right to rule over the land. Duryodhana refused their petition, and he even denied them their humble resolution to just rule over five villages to avoid conflict. The outcome of a war between the two clans seemed inevitable. Krishna, who at the time was in his human form, acted as a messenger between both, decided not to fight directly but gave the Kshatriyas the chance to choose between having his army or having him as an advisor for help and guidance. Duryodhana chose the army; thus, the Pandavas were left with Krishna himself on their side.

Dharma compelled Arjuna, the leader of the Pandavas, to fight against the members of his own family – the Kuru Dynasty. In the middle of this war, he became overwhelmed by the reactions to the performance of his prescribed duty as a warrior and asked for the advice of his beloved cousin and Charioteer Lord

Krishna. Thus, the whole philosophy of yoga expounded as means to clear his mind and bring him back to the execution of his prescribed duty.

The outcome of his conversation was the re-established of dharma, the religious principles, and a yoga system that had been before spoken of to the Sun God, who passed it on by disciple succession until the chain was broken.

This system exposed that the jiva atma, or soul bewildered by the sense and by the effect of Maya, believes itself to be the creator and the enjoyer of the world around us. Therefore, the soul forgets its eternal duty and relation to the lord, its Sanatan Dharma.

The comprehension of the Bhagavad Gita entails the understanding of some fundamental truths. The first is Isvara, which means that only God is the controller and the true enjoyer of our actions. The second is Jiva, which means that we experience the separation of the source and that we entail ourselves in this mundane world pulled by our senses.

The third Prakriti means that despite being part of God's creation and having a material body, we undergo the penances of the fourth truth, time or Kala, which creates unpleasant experiences such as growing up in old age, sickness, and death.

The last of these fundamental truths is karma, which means that we are bound to receive the reactions of every single action we perform within this lifetime and the ones before.

The Bhagavad Gita teaches that we have to purify this materially contaminated consciousness and the corresponding apparition of the ego by the process of bhakti or devotional service. To act according to the nature of this path means that we should release ourselves from the outcome of our action and perceive God as the receiver and true enjoyer of all the actions performed by this material body.

The Brahma Samhita begins like this:

Isvara Paramah Krsnah Sac Cid Ananada Vighraha Anadir Adir Govindah Sarva
Karana Karanam



Krishna is Govinda, the supreme enjoyer, the cause of all causes, and whose body is the expression of eternity, wisdom, and unbound happiness. He is the source of compassion and the absolute shelter for the fallen.

Nature of Maya

Maya is usually translated as ‘illusion’ or ‘unreality’. That the world is Maya, is the basis of the emphasis on yoga and meditation in Indian thought, which is regarded as the means of moving beyond Maya.

In the modern world, we live in a turbulent ocean of appearances, impressions and influences. Unless we learn to dive beyond these surface waves, we will unlikely find the truth of life and will often be deceived, not only by others but also by ourselves, as each one of us has his or her illusions about self and world as well.

We should always try to probe more deeply in life starting with the everyday factors of our daily experience from our own thought, breath and action. When you see someone well known to you next time, for example, look a little deeper and you will find something new or different about them. When you go out into nature the next time, try to look beyond the veil of appearances to the inner light, law and intelligence through which nature works.

“How real is the world that we experience through our senses? Do we see reality through our senses, or are we merely receiving a surface glimpse of something far greater or even different than what it seems?” ~ David Frawley

To see the world as Maya means to look through that Maya to the Divine presence behind it, through which its wonder, delight and transformational power can unfold.

Understand the Maya of your life, not only to take you beyond all illusions, but to enter into the supreme magic of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, the cosmic reality, which is present everywhere and at all times.

Maya of the human world contains various hidden influences, control mechanisms and power games behind the social, economic, political, intellectual, religious and spiritual influences that make up our social order.

We live in a world of Maya of great mystery, magic, hidden dimensions, secret energies and occult forces. Most of these forces are beneficent, with a certain delight that can be found at the core of all that we come into association with.

Yet there are dangerous forces as well that we should not underestimate.

Spiritual sciences like Yoga or Vedic astrology help us understand and work with both these positive and negative energies, enhancing the positive and protecting us from the negative. ~Vamadeva Shastri

Where do You find maya in your life?

Yoga in the *Bhagavad Gita* - By Vamadeva Shastri

The *Bhagavad Gita* speaks of the practice of Yoga throughout and is traditionally regarded as an authoritative *Yoga Shastra* or Yoga text like the *Yoga Sutras*. It contains several definitions of Yoga and the recommendation of various yogic practices. We will examine some of the most important of these here.

The term Yoga occurs in the *Gita* mainly as *Buddhi Yoga* or the ‘Yoga of the intelligent mind’ (II.39). It is emphasized relative to Samkhya, which is the means of taking us beyond the bonds of karma. This *Buddhi Yoga* comprises all forms of Yoga as work, devotion or knowledge, but it starts with work or Karma Yoga, which requires putting our practical life and action under the order of a higher intelligence. In this regard, all Yoga should begin with Karma Yoga, which means an action done out of service rather than for self gain. The *Gita* explains Yoga as Karma Yoga in several key verses.

II.47. You are only authorized to do your work, not to gain any reward for doing it. Do not act only seeking the fruits of action, nor get attached to inaction.

II.48. Abiding in Yoga, do your work, renouncing attachment. Maintaining balance in success and failure, Yoga is known as the state of balance (samatva).

Yoga is said here to be ‘the state of balance’ (sama-tva). This is the first and perhaps most important definition of Yoga in the *Gita* relative to Ayurveda. This Yoga of balance is the same as the Yoga of intelligence or Buddhi Yoga. It is the Buddhi that brings Sattva and balance to the mind.

Yoga is the balanced state of being on all levels. Note that balance is not moderation as this term is sometimes translated. Balance is a dynamic and transformative condition of harmony. It is not just doing the ordinary, the in between or simply being moderate in what one does. It is doing what balances out the doshas, pranas and gunas within one and takes one to a higher level of being. Balancing the doshas, therefore, is a kind of Yoga of the physical body.

II.49. Karma that is done with desire is inferior to that Yoga done by the mind in a balanced state (Buddhi Yoga). Be at peace in the higher mind. Mediocre are those who act seeking gain for themselves only.

II.50. With a balanced mind (yogic buddhi) abandon both the seeking of good and bad results. Therefore, apply yourself in the practice of Yoga. Yoga is skill in action.

The *Gita* explains Yoga further, particularly as Karma Yoga. In such a yogic state of mind, when we are not simply seeking results but giving attention to the action itself, our work becomes much more effective. You can easily observe this for yourself. When we are acting only for the sake of gain we fail to give proper attention to our work and as a consequence the work suffers. On the other hand, when we love our work and give full attention to it, regardless of the results, that work goes well. In this regard, ‘Yoga is skill in action’ (Yogah karmasu kaushalam). This skill arises from a balanced mind and consciousness and so is not simply talent but a broad capacity for right action.

It is this yogic state of mind or the balanced mind that we should cultivate in our practice of both Yoga and Ayurveda. In Ayurvedic psychology, it is this

balanced or sattvic buddhi that is the means of overcoming psychological afflictions of Rajas and Tamas or passion and dullness.

Ayurveda speaks of *Prajnaparadha* or failure of intelligence as one of the main causes of disease. This is the imbalanced state of the Buddhi. The *Gita* in detail describes the qualities of one who has Prajna (sthita prajna), II.54-58. The *Gita* then outlines the main psychological cause of suffering:

II.62. Thinking of the objects of the senses, a person gets attached to them. From attachment is born desire. From desire is born anger.

II.63. From anger comes delusion. From delusion, memory gets confused. From confusion of memory, the intelligent mind is destroyed. When the intelligence is destroyed, everything is lost.

Attachment arises from thinking about the objects of the senses, dwelling upon the pleasure that we get from them. Out of that attachment comes desire to have them again. If that desire is frustrated, then anger develops. Anger puts the mind in a state of delusion or wrong perception. That in turn confuses the memory. When we fail to remember things correctly, our intelligence and its power of judgment get destroyed.

The same process occurs when we follow a wrong life-style, pursuing, for example, the food that is tasty but is not good for us.

II.66. Real intelligence is not possible for one who does not have any yogic self-control, nor is meditation. For those who cannot meditate there is no peace. For those who have no peace, how can there be happiness?

II.67. The mind runs after the wandering senses. Then one's wisdom (prajna) is carried away like the wind blows away a boat on the sea.

Self-control and inner balance is the basis of real intelligence, such as occurs from following yogic and Ayurvedic life-styles. Without that we are simply victims of sensory impulses. These lead to spiritual, psychological and physical suffering. Without internal balance, external forces will always dominate the mind.

Two Types of Yoga

The *Gita* further divides Yoga into two main types as Karma Yoga or the Yoga of Action and Jnana Yoga or the Yoga of Knowledge, though the two are interrelated.

III.3. In the beginning I created two Yoga approaches in the world. The first is the Yoga of Knowledge for those of contemplative minds (followers of Samkhya). The second is Karma Yoga for those of an active bent of mind.

This is the main distinction among different yogic approaches. Yet the Yoga of Knowledge is for those who are not interested in the field of action, which means that they have more Sattva in their nature. Karma Yoga is for those of an active bent of mind, who have more Rajas. Yet action can be internal, like mantra and Pranayama, or external, like service or ritual. The Yoga of internal action also has more Sattva. Later Krishna speaks of the basic unity of Samkhya and Yoga, meaning the Yoga of Knowledge and the Yoga of Action. Knowledge itself is the highest action, while selfless action is only possible from the standpoint of this inner knowledge.

V.4. The foolish speak of Samkhya and Yoga as different. He who follows one completely also gets the fruit of the other.

V.5. That state that is attained by the follower of the Yoga of Knowledge (Jnani) that is also gained by the follower of Karma Yoga. He who sees Samkhya and Yoga as one, only he truly sees.

Samkhya and Yoga or the Yogas of Knowledge and Action are also one as theory and practice, knowledge and its application.

Yoga as Yajna or Sacrifice

The *Gita* often defines Yoga as a *Yajna* or sacrifice. Yoga is meant to be a sacrifice in the sense of making something sacred by offering it up to our higher consciousness for transformation. The idea behind the importance of Yajna is that whatever we offer up will be transformed or taken to a higher level. The practice of Yajna is Karma Yoga, either as ritual or as service. Even the other types of Yoga are types of yajnas or selfless offerings.

IV.26. Some Yogis offer hearing and the other senses into the fire of Samyama (yogic concentration). Others offer sound and the other objects of the senses in the fires of the senses.

IV.27. Other Yogis who are illumed with knowledge offer all the actions of the senses and the Prana into the fire of Samyama on the Self (Atman).

IV.28. There are other Yogis of firm vows who sacrifice wealth, who practice Tapas (austerity) as a sacrifice, who practice Yoga as a sacrifice, who practice Svadhyaya (self-study) as a sacrifice, or who practice knowledge as a sacrifice.

IV.29. Yet others offer Prana into Apana as a sacrifice and Apana into Prana. Controlling the movement of Prana and Apana, they are devoted to Pranayama. While others with regulated diet offer the Pranas into Prana. These verses refer to the different types of Agni Yoga or Fire Yoga that we will discuss later in the course as perhaps the original form of Yoga. Just as Ayurveda is centered on Agni, primarily as the digestive fire and the fire of healing, Yoga is centered on Agni as the fire of consciousness and the fire of Yoga. §

IV.26 and 27 refer specifically to the fire of Samyama or yogic concentration. Yogic concentration creates an internal fire of awareness that can purify whatever we offer into it. Samyama on the Self or Purusha is the highest form of Samyama. Pratyahara is indicated in these verses.

IV. 28 indicates many types of Yajnas, external and internal, and different aspects of Yoga as a Yajna, particularly Tapas and Svadhyaya, the main factors of Patanjali's Kriya Yoga.

IV.29 speaks of Pranayama as a Yajna, an offering into the fire of Prana. It even refers to right diet as a Yajna, an offering into the Jatharagni. This is the main Yajna for healing the physical body.

The Mahabharata

The *Mahabharata*, the greater epic from which the *Bhagavad Gita* derives, contains many other teachings like the *Gita* that discuss Yoga, Samkhya and Vedanta in great detail, notably the *Moksha Dharma Parva* and the *Anugita*. Yogic topics of meditation, mantra, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Purusha, Prakriti and the tattvas and many others are covered in detail, with the Ayurvedic doshas also mentioned.

MAIN CHAPTERS & QUOTES GITA

Chapter Two — Contents of the Gita

Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness. In this condition, I am asking you to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto you. Please instruct me.

As the embodied soul continuously passes in this body from boyhood to youth and old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The non-permanent appearance of happiness and distress, and their disappearance in due course, are like the appearance of winter and summer seasons. They arise from sense perception, and one must learn to tolerate them undisturbed.

For the soul, there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, and primeval. As a person puts on new garments, giving up the old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones. One who has taken his birth is sure to die, and after death, one is sure to be born again. Therefore, in the unavoidable discharge of your duty, you should not lament.

Do thou fight for the sake of fighting, without considering happiness or distress, loss or gain, victory or defeat? In the minds of those who are too attached to sense enjoyment and material opulence and who are bewildered by such things, the resolute determination for devotional service does not take place, becomes transcendental to the three modalities of nature, free from all dualities and all anxieties for gain and safety and be established in the self.

Perform your duty equipoised, abandoning all attachment to success or failure; such equanimity is called YOGA, the art of all work. One who is not affected by whatever good or evil he may obtain, neither praising nor despising it, is firmly fixed in perfect knowledge.

While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment, lust develops, and from lust, anger arises. From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion, the bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost, one falls again into the material pool.

What is night for all beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled, and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage.

Chapter Three – Karma Yoga

There are two kinds of men. Some are inclined to understand by empirical, philosophical speculation, and others by devotional service. Not by merely abstaining from formwork can one achieve freedom from reaction, nor by renunciation alone can one attain perfection.

Everyone is forced to act helplessly according to the qualities they have acquired from the modes of material nature; therefore, no one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment.

Work done as a sacrifice for Vishnu must be performed; otherwise, work causes bondage in this material world. The demigods being pleased by sacrifices will also please you, and from this cooperation, prosperity will reign for all. All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. The performance of yajna produces rains.

For one who takes pleasure only in the self, there is no duty. Nevertheless, one should act as a matter of duty, for by working without attachment, one attains the supreme. Whatever action a great man performs, ordinary men follow, and whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, the world pursues.

The spirit soul, bewildered by the influence of the ego, thinks himself to be the doer of the activities which are, in fact, carried out by the three modalities of nature.

Surrendering all your works unto Me, with full knowledge, without desires for a profit with no claims of proprietorship, and free from lethargy, fight.

By what is one impelled to sinful acts even unwillingly?

It is only Lust, my dear Arjuna, what is born of contact with the material mode of passion and later transformed into wrath, which is the all-devouring sinful enemy of this world.

Chapter Six – Dhyana Yoga

You should know what is called renunciation to be the same as yoga, or linking oneself with the Supreme, for one can never become a yogi unless he renounces the desire for sense gratification.

For him, who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends, but for one who has failed to do so, his mind will be the greatest enemy. For one who

has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached. To such a man, happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same, and he sees the honest, the passionate, the envious, the pious, and the sinners with an equal mind.

To practice yoga, one should go to a secluded place, lay kusa grass on the ground, and then cover it with a deerskin and soft cloth. The seat should not be too low or high and be situated in a sacred place. The yogi should then sit very firmly and practice yoga to purify the heart, mind, senses, and activities, fixing the mind on one point. Keeping the neck and head erect in a straight line and staring at the tip of the nose. One should meditate upon Me within the heart and make me the ultimate goal of life. Devoid of fear and free from sex life.

There is no way to become a yogi if one overeats or eats too little, sleeps too much, or does not sleep enough. He who is regulated in his habits of eating, sleeping, recreation, and work can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system. As a lamp in a windless place does not waver, the transcendentalist, whose mind is controlled, always remains steady in his meditation on the transcendent self.

The stage of perfection or Samadhi is characterized by one's ability to see the self by the pure mind and relish and rejoice in the self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness, never departing from the truth, never shaken even in the midst of greatest difficulty. One should abandon, without exception, all material desires born of mental speculation and thus control all senses on all sides of the mind.

A true yogi observes Me in all beings and sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized person sees me, the same Supreme Lord, everywhere. For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to me. He is a perfect Yogi who, by comparison to his own self, sees the true equality of all beings in both their happiness and distress.

Chapter Twelve — Bhakti Yoga

Arjuna inquired: Which are considered to be more perfect, those who are always properly engaged in Your devotional service or those who worship the impersonal Brahman, the unmanifest?

Those who fix their minds on My personal form and are constantly engaged in worship with faith are considered by Me the most perfect. Those who worship the unmanifested, the all-pervading and inconceivable by controlling the senses

and being equally disposed to everyone, engaged in the welfare of all, at last achieve me.

If you can't fix your mind on me, then follow the Bhakti Yoga regulations; if you can't follow the regulations, then try to work for me. If you cannot work for me, then try giving up the result of your activities. If you cannot do this, cultivate knowledge. Even better than knowledge is meditation, and better than meditation is renunciation.

One who is not envious, but is a kind friend to all living entities, who does not think himself a proprietor and is free from a false ego, who is equal in both happiness and distress, who is tolerant, always satisfied, self-controlled, and engaged in devotional service with determination, is the dearest to me.

Ramayana

The Ramayana is one of the two major ancient Hindu epics, the other being the Mahabharata. It is attributed to the sage Valmiki and is written in Sanskrit. The Ramayana is a revered text in Hinduism and has had a significant impact on Indian culture, art, and literature.

The Ramayana tells the story of Prince Rama, the seventh avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu, and his journey to rescue his wife Sita from the demon king Ravana. The epic is divided into seven books, called Kandas, and consists of about 24,000 verses.

The story begins with Rama's exile from the kingdom of Ayodhya due to a conspiracy by his stepmother. Rama's loyal wife, Sita, accompanies him during his exile in the forest. However, she is abducted by Ravana, the powerful king of Lanka (present-day Sri Lanka), who desires her. Rama forms an alliance with the monkey king Hanuman and his army of monkeys to rescue Sita.

The epic narrates their adventures and the various challenges they face along the way. It explores themes of honor, duty, loyalty, love, and the battle between good and evil. Ultimately, Rama confronts Ravana in a fierce battle and emerges victorious, rescuing Sita and returning to Ayodhya.

The Ramayana is not just a story of heroism and adventure but also provides moral and philosophical teachings. It highlights the importance of righteousness, the significance of fulfilling one's duty, and the consequences of one's actions. The characters in the epic, such as Rama, Sita, Hanuman, and Ravana, are revered and considered role models for their virtues or cautionary examples for their flaws. The Ramayana has been retold in various languages and forms across different cultures and regions of Asia. It has inspired numerous adaptations, including plays, dance performances, music compositions, films, and television series. The epic continues to be widely read, studied, and celebrated in Hindu communities, and it holds a significant place in the religious and cultural fabric of India.

Main Characters:

- **Rama:** The protagonist of the Ramayana, Rama is the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu. He is portrayed as an ideal prince and embodies righteousness, duty, and honor. Rama is known for his unwavering devotion to dharma (righteousness) and his love for his wife, Sita.
- **Sita:** Sita is Rama's wife and the epitome of loyalty, purity, and devotion. She accompanies Rama during his exile and is eventually abducted by Ravana. Sita represents the ideal woman in Hindu mythology and is revered as the embodiment of virtue.
- **Hanuman:** Hanuman is a monkey warrior and a devotee of Rama. He plays a crucial role in the story by helping Rama in his quest to rescue Sita. Hanuman possesses extraordinary strength, intelligence, and unwavering loyalty. He is revered for his courage, devotion, and wisdom.
- **Ravana:** Ravana is the antagonist of the Ramayana, a powerful and ten-headed demon king who rules over Lanka. He is depicted as highly knowledgeable and skilled but is consumed by his ego and desires. Ravana

abducts Sita due to his infatuation with her, leading to the epic battle between him and Rama.

Summary of the Chapters (Kandas) in the Ramayana:

- **Balakanda:** This chapter introduces the background and lineage of Rama. It narrates the story of his birth, childhood, and marriage to Sita. It also describes the conspiracy of Kaikeyi, Rama's stepmother, leading to his exile from Ayodhya.
- **Ayodhyakanda:** This chapter explores the events that unfold in Ayodhya after Rama's exile. It focuses on the grief and anguish experienced by King Dasharatha and his wives. Meanwhile, Rama, Sita, and Rama's loyal brother, Lakshmana, begin their journey into the forest.
- **Aranyakanda:** The Aranyakanda describes Rama's life in the forest as an ascetic. It portrays their encounters with various sages, demons, and celestial beings. The chapter also introduces Surpanakha, Ravana's sister, who instigates the chain of events leading to Sita's abduction.
- **Kishkindhakanda:** In this chapter, Rama meets Hanuman and forms an alliance with him and the vanara (monkey) king, Sugriva. Together, they help Sugriva regain his kingdom from his treacherous brother Vali.
- **Sundarakanda:** Sundarakanda primarily focuses on Hanuman's journey to Lanka in search of Sita. Hanuman successfully finds Sita, conveys Rama's message to her, and wreaks havoc in Lanka before returning to report his findings to Rama.
- **Yuddhakanda:** Yuddhakanda is the chapter that describes the final battle between Rama's forces and Ravana's army. It details the strategies, valor, and sacrifices of various characters and culminates in Rama's victorious battle against Ravana.
- **Uttarakanda:** The Uttarakanda is an optional chapter that is not present in all versions of the Ramayana. It narrates Rama's rule in Ayodhya after his return and focuses on the events surrounding Sita's banishment and her subsequent reunion with Mother Earth.

The Ramayana imparts several profound teachings and moral lessons. Here are the top 10 main teachings from the story:

- **Dharma:** The Ramayana emphasizes the importance of upholding dharma, which refers to righteousness, duty, and moral order. The characters in the epic exemplify the principles of dharma in their actions and choices.
- **Loyalty and Devotion:** The story highlights the significance of loyalty and devotion, particularly through the unwavering loyalty of Hanuman towards Rama and Sita. Hanuman's selfless service and devotion are regarded as exemplary virtues.
- **Love and Sacrifice:** The Ramayana showcases the power of love and the willingness to make sacrifices for loved ones. Rama's relentless pursuit to rescue Sita and Sita's unwavering love and loyalty to Rama exemplify this teaching.

- **Goodness Triumphs Over Evil:** The epic emphasizes the victory of good over evil. Rama's righteousness prevails over Ravana's malevolence, emphasizing that ultimately, goodness triumphs over wickedness.
- **Respect for Parents and Elders:** The Ramayana promotes the importance of respecting and obeying parents and elders. Rama's unfaltering obedience to his father's words, despite the personal sacrifices involved, exemplifies this value.
- **Courage and Heroism:** The epic extols the virtues of courage and heroism. Rama and his allies, including Hanuman, exhibit extraordinary courage and valor in their battles against formidable foes, inspiring readers to face challenges with bravery.
- **Importance of Friendship:** The Ramayana portrays the significance of true friendship. Rama's alliance with Sugriva and Hanuman demonstrates the strength of friendship and how it can help overcome obstacles.
- **Consequences of Actions:** The story underscores the consequences of one's actions. Characters like Ravana, who succumbs to his ego and desires, face severe consequences, while characters like Rama, who uphold virtue, are rewarded.
- **Importance of Humility:** The Ramayana teaches the value of humility. Despite being a powerful prince, Rama remains humble and compassionate, setting an example for others.
- **Inner Strength and Self-Realization:** The Ramayana emphasizes the development of inner strength and the journey toward self-realization. Characters like Rama and Hanuman exhibit spiritual strength, self-control, and self-awareness as they navigate their challenges.

These teachings resonate with readers and have had a significant impact on moral and ethical frameworks, shaping cultural and societal values in Hindu communities for centuries.

The teachings of the Ramayana are deeply rooted in the historical and cultural context of ancient India. While the Ramayana is an epic work of literature, it reflects the societal values, norms, and beliefs prevalent during the time it was composed.

- **Dharmic Society:** The Ramayana portrays a society based on the concept of dharma, which encompasses moral, social, and ethical responsibilities. The teachings of upholding dharma resonated with the historical context of ancient India, where the caste system and societal roles were governed by principles of righteousness and duty.
- **Moral Codes and Virtues:** The Ramayana reinforces the importance of moral codes and virtues such as loyalty, truthfulness, righteousness, and humility. These values were integral to the social fabric of ancient Indian society, where adherence to moral principles was considered essential for the smooth functioning of communities.
- **Ideal Kingship:** The character of Rama in the Ramayana embodies the ideal qualities of a king. The story emphasizes the duties and responsibilities of a ruler, such as protecting his subjects, upholding justice, and making

decisions based on the welfare of the kingdom. These teachings align with the historical context of ancient India, where kingship was seen as a sacred duty with specific moral obligations.

- **Gender Roles and Virtuous Women:** The Ramayana reflects the prevailing gender roles and societal expectations of ancient India. Sita, the ideal wife, is depicted as loyal, virtuous, and devoted to her husband. Her character symbolizes the qualities expected of women during that time, such as obedience, chastity, and self-sacrifice.
- **Importance of Lineage and Ancestry:** The Ramayana places significance on lineage and ancestry. Rama's royal lineage and his obligation to continue the family lineage by fulfilling his father's wishes are emphasized in the narrative. This reflects the importance placed on lineage and ancestry in ancient Indian society, where family heritage and dynastic continuity held cultural and social significance.

It's important to note that while the Ramayana reflects the historical context of ancient India, its teachings extend beyond that specific period. The timeless moral lessons, such as the triumph of good over evil and the importance of righteousness, continue to resonate with individuals across cultures and generations, making the Ramayana a revered text with enduring relevance.

The Ramayana is a revered epic in Hindu mythology and has been interpreted and analyzed from various perspectives over the centuries. While it is generally held in high regard, there are a few controversial ideas or interpretations that have emerged regarding certain aspects of the epic. Here are a few examples:

- **Treatment of Women:** Some critics argue that the Ramayana portrays a patriarchal society and perpetuates traditional gender roles. The treatment of Sita, in particular, has been a subject of debate, with discussions centering around issues of female autonomy, victim-blaming, and the subjugation of women.
- **Characterization of Ravana:** Ravana, the primary antagonist of the Ramayana, has been a subject of controversy. Some scholars argue that Ravana is unfairly depicted as a one-dimensional evil character, while others suggest that his character represents a complex interplay of good and evil, highlighting the gray areas of human nature.
- **Caste and Social Hierarchy:** The Ramayana portrays a hierarchical society with different social orders and castes. Critics argue that the epic reinforces and legitimizes social divisions by highlighting the importance of one's birth and social position.
- **Violence and Ethical Dilemmas:** The depiction of violence in the Ramayana has been a topic of discussion. Critics question the ethical implications of the war between Rama and Ravana, the destruction caused by the monkey army, and the consequential loss of life.
- **Historical Authenticity:** Some scholars debate the historical authenticity of the Ramayana and whether it is based on real events or if it is a work of

fiction and mythology. This debate revolves around determining the extent to which the events described in the epic align with historical realities.

It's important to note that these controversial ideas do not represent a consensus view but rather reflect different interpretations and perspectives on the Ramayana. The epic continues to be a subject of study, analysis, and reinterpretation, and different scholars and individuals may have varying viewpoints on its themes, characters, and messages.

Vedic literature:

Vedic literature refers to a vast collection of ancient texts composed in Sanskrit during the Vedic period in ancient India. These texts are considered the oldest sacred scriptures of Hinduism and are the foundation of Hindu religious and philosophical traditions. Here is a summary of Vedic literature:

- **Rigveda:** The Rigveda is the oldest and most important of the Vedic texts. It consists of hymns, prayers, and poetic verses dedicated to various deities. The hymns primarily focus on nature, cosmology, and rituals. The Rigveda is divided into ten books or mandalas and is a significant source of information about the religious beliefs and practices of the Vedic people.
- **Samaveda:** The Samaveda is a collection of melodies and chants derived from the Rigveda. It consists of verses set to musical notation, intended to be chanted during rituals and ceremonies. The Samaveda emphasizes the importance of sound and its role in invoking spiritual energy and divine blessings.
- **Yajurveda:** The Yajurveda provides guidance and instructions for performing rituals and sacrifices (yajnas). It contains prose passages known as yajus and explanations of rituals, prayers, and invocations. The Yajurveda is divided into two main branches: the Krishna Yajurveda and the Shukla Yajurveda.
- **Atharvaveda:** The Atharvaveda is a collection of hymns, spells, and incantations. It is distinct from the other Vedas as it deals with a wide range of subjects, including healing, magic, social customs, and everyday life. The Atharvaveda reflects a more folkloric and practical aspect of Vedic society.
- **Brahmanas:** The Brahmanas are prose texts that provide explanations and interpretations of the rituals and ceremonies described in the Vedas. They offer detailed instructions for conducting rituals and serve as a guide for priests. The Brahmanas also contain mythological and philosophical explanations of the Vedic rituals.
- **Aranyakas:** Aranyakas, meaning "forest texts," are associated with rituals and philosophical reflections performed by hermits and ascetics in secluded forests. These texts provide insights into the mystical and contemplative aspects of Vedic thought and explore philosophical concepts and meditation practices.
- **Upanishads:** The Upanishads are philosophical texts that explore profound questions about the nature of reality, the self (Atman), and the ultimate truth.

(Brahman). They delve into metaphysical and spiritual inquiries and are considered the culmination of Vedic thought. The Upanishads form the foundation of Hindu philosophy and are regarded as profound spiritual teachings.

These are the main categories of Vedic literature, each with its unique characteristics, teachings, and purposes. The Vedic texts laid the groundwork for Hindu philosophy, ritual practices, and spiritual exploration, shaping the religious and cultural fabric of ancient and modern India.

Dualistic and Non Dualistic Philosophy

In Vedanta philosophy, we can categorize the nature of the school of thought and their approach by dividing them into Dvaita and Advaita Vedanta.

In the Dvaita school, the idea of God having an independent personality from that of the jiva or soul, thus allowing this jiva to approach and relate to the divinity preserving its personal character and identity, establishing a relation of service towards the divine through the different kind of vatsalya or rasa lilas (friend, son, father, lover), namely the different ways of relating to the personality of Godhead.

In the Advaita School, the idea is that being part of God; we must be equal in terms of our own internal potency, thus the possibility of merging into that light and becoming one and equal with God. In this approach, we will find the attempt to fuse into the divine through meditation and dissolution of the ego.

In the sacred scriptures, relating to the divine and feeling its presence is compared to the different modalities of perceiving the sun's energy. On the first level, we can feel the outer effulgence of God as one can feel the heat from the sun's rays (brahmanyoti). On the second, we can feel and connect with the rays of the sun that carry this heat within their body (Paramatma). On the last one, we can access and establish a relationship with the core or heart of the sun by recognizing its own internal potency and personality (Bhagavan).

Nevertheless, it is said that man finds realization in this material existence through the fulfillment of Dharma (duty), Artha (wealth), Kama (pleasure), and Moksha (liberation). Once one has undergone these different stages of life, one is fit to remember its constitutional position and can return back to its eternal duty. The one of serving others starts purification and returns to the source.

Dualistic and non-dualistic philosophies are two different ways of understanding reality and the relationship between the self and the world.

Dualistic philosophy sees the self and the external world as separate entities. It believes in distinct substances and often divides reality into physical and spiritual realms. Non-dualistic philosophy, on the other hand, emphasizes the unity and interconnectedness of all things. It goes beyond the perceived separation between self and world and seeks to realize the underlying oneness. Dualistic philosophy acknowledges an individual ego or identity, which is seen as separate from the external world. This can lead to a sense of longing, suffering, and a desire to overcome the perceived division. Non-dualistic philosophy challenges the idea of an independent self and invites practitioners to experience the underlying unity directly. Practices like meditation and self-inquiry are used to dissolve the illusion of separation.

Non-dualistic philosophy teaches that all apparent distinctions and divisions are ultimately illusions created by limited perception. It emphasizes the concept of "nonduality" or "oneness" as the ultimate truth, leading to a sense of wholeness, liberation, and freedom from suffering.

While these philosophies present different perspectives, they are not mutually exclusive. Dualistic philosophy helps navigate the diversity and richness of human experience, while non-dualistic philosophy invites a transcendent understanding of the unity that connects all beings.

In conclusion, both dualistic and non-dualistic philosophies offer valuable insights into reality and the nature of the self. By exploring and integrating these contrasting philosophies, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of existence and embark on a transformative journey towards profound truth.

Here are some of the main teachers associated with Dualistic and Non-Dualistic philosophies, along with some of their famous quotes:

Dualistic Philosophy:

- René Descartes (1596-1650): Descartes was a French philosopher and mathematician who is known for his formulation of mind-body dualism. He argued for the separation of the mind and body as distinct substances.

Famous Quote: "Cogito, ergo sum." (I think, therefore I am)

- G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831): Hegel was a German philosopher who developed a comprehensive system of philosophical thought known as Absolute Idealism. His philosophy involved a dialectical process that sought to reconcile opposing ideas.

Famous Quote: "The truth is the whole."

Non-Dualistic Philosophy:

- Adi Shankara (788-820): Shankara was an Indian philosopher and theologian who is widely regarded as the most influential exponent of Advaita Vedanta, a non-dualistic school of thought in Hinduism.

Famous Quote: "Brahma satyam jagan mithya, jivo brahmaiva naparah." (Brahman is the only truth, the world is an illusion, and the individual self is non-different from Brahman.)

- Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950): Maharshi was an Indian sage who advocated for self-inquiry and the direct realization of the true Self. His teachings emphasized the non-dual nature of reality and the need for self-awareness.

Famous Quote: "The mind is a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts arise because there is the thinker. The thinker is the ego. The ego, if sought, will automatically vanish."

- Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897-1981): Maharaj was an Indian spiritual teacher and philosopher who taught Advaita Vedanta. His teachings focused on self-realization and the direct experience of one's true nature.

Famous Quote: "Wisdom tells me I am nothing. Love tells me I am everything. Between the two, my life flows."

It's important to note that these quotes are just a glimpse of the wisdom and teachings of these philosophers, and further exploration of their works will provide a deeper understanding of their philosophies and insights.

Spirit and Matter

The philosophy of spirit and matter explores the relationship between these two fundamental aspects of existence. It encompasses various philosophical and spiritual perspectives that seek to understand the nature and interplay of spirit (or consciousness) and matter (physical reality).

At its core, this philosophy examines the question of whether spirit and matter are fundamentally separate or interconnected. Dualistic philosophies posit a strict separation between spirit and matter, viewing them as distinct and independent entities. According to this perspective, spirit is often associated with consciousness, soul, or the divine, while matter refers to the physical world and material substances. Dualistic philosophies emphasize the duality and potential conflict between these two realms.

In contrast, non-dualistic philosophies assert the essential unity and interconnectedness of spirit and matter. They posit that there is an underlying unifying principle that transcends the apparent duality between these aspects of existence. Non-dualistic philosophies often propose that spirit and matter are different expressions or manifestations of the same ultimate reality. They emphasize that the material world is not separate from the spiritual realm but is an integral part of it.

Various philosophical and spiritual traditions offer perspectives on the relationship between spirit and matter. Advaita Vedanta in Hindu philosophy, for example, teaches that spirit (Brahman) is the ultimate reality, and the material world (Maya) is an illusory manifestation of that spirit. Similarly, in some strands of mystical Sufism, there is a focus on the divine essence permeating all of creation, uniting spirit and matter.

The philosophy of spirit and matter has broader implications beyond the realm of metaphysics. It influences our understanding of human existence, consciousness, and the nature of reality. It can shape our perspective on the purpose and meaning of life, the interplay between the spiritual and physical dimensions, and our relationship with the world around us.

Overall, the philosophy of spirit and matter explores the relationship between these two fundamental aspects of existence, considering whether they are fundamentally separate or interconnected. Dualistic philosophies emphasize

their distinctness, while non-dualistic philosophies highlight their essential unity. Understanding and contemplating this relationship can provide insights into the nature of reality, the human experience, and our place in the world.

In Western philosophy, the exploration of the relationship between spirit and matter has been a significant topic of discussion and debate throughout history. Here are some key perspectives from Western philosophical traditions:

- **Plato and Neoplatonism:** Plato, an influential Greek philosopher, proposed a dualistic view of reality. He believed in the existence of two realms: the intelligible realm of eternal Forms (spirit) and the sensible realm of the physical world (matter). According to Plato, the physical world is a reflection or imitation of the eternal Forms, and the ultimate reality lies in the realm of the Forms.

Neoplatonism, a philosophical school influenced by Plato, developed a more mystical perspective on the spirit-matter relationship. Neoplatonists like Plotinus emphasized the unity of all things in a transcendent One, which encompasses both the spiritual and material realms.

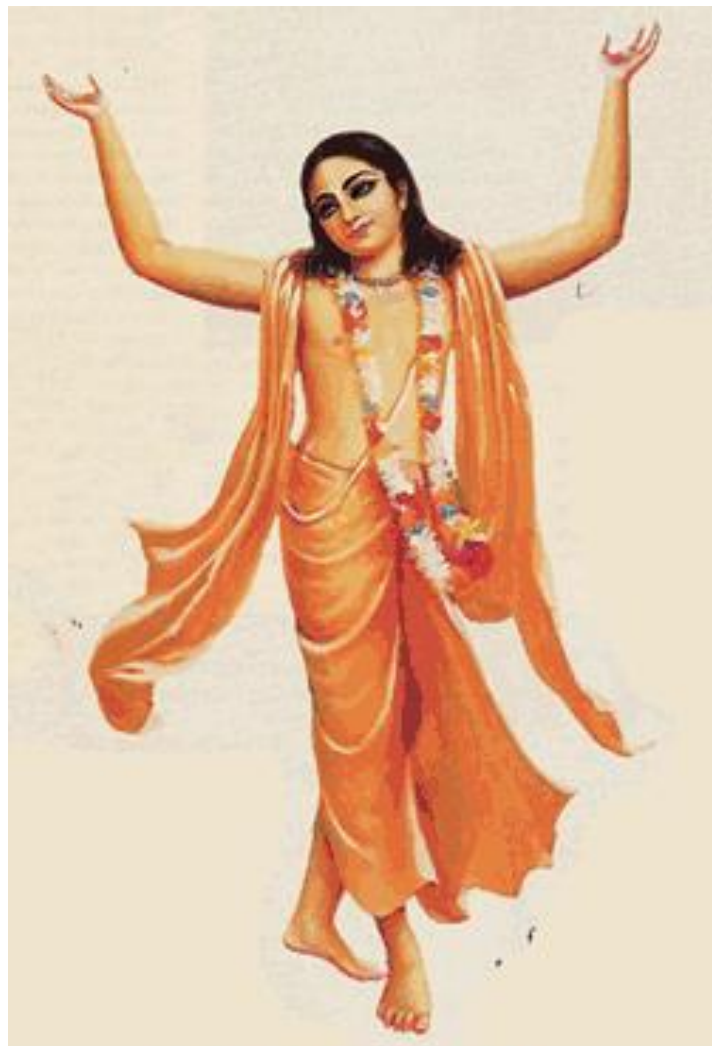
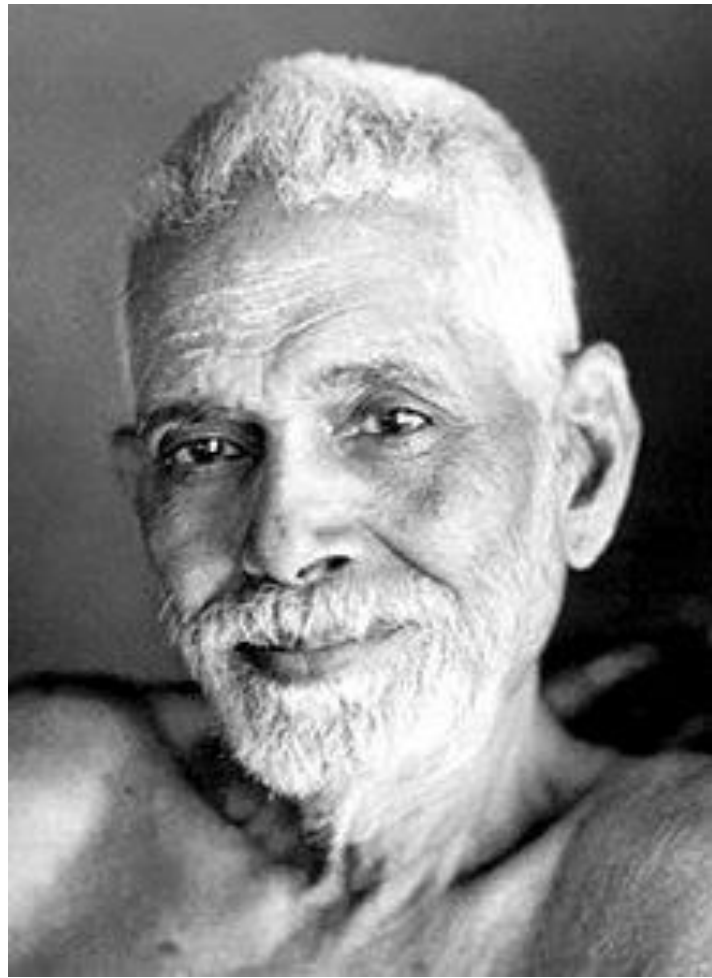
- **Descartes and Cartesian Dualism:** René Descartes, a French philosopher of the 17th century, formulated a dualistic philosophy known as Cartesian Dualism. Descartes posited a fundamental distinction between mind (spirit) and matter. He believed that the mind and body are separate substances with distinct properties, and that they interact in the pineal gland. This view had a significant influence on the philosophy of mind in Western thought.
- **Idealism and Materialism:** In the 18th and 19th centuries, philosophical movements such as German Idealism and British Empiricism explored the nature of reality and consciousness. Idealism, exemplified by philosophers like Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, proposed that reality is fundamentally mental or spiritual in nature. They emphasized the primacy of consciousness and the idea that the physical world is shaped by subjective perception.

On the other hand, materialism emerged as a contrasting perspective, often associated with thinkers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Karl Marx. Materialism posits that matter is the fundamental reality, and consciousness or mind arises from material processes in the brain. Materialists reject the

existence of a separate spiritual realm and seek to explain human experiences purely in terms of physical phenomena.

- Process Philosophy: In the 20th century, process philosophy, particularly associated with Alfred North Whitehead, offered a more nuanced perspective on the relationship between spirit and matter. Process philosophy emphasizes the interconnectedness and dynamism of all things. It views reality as a process of becoming and suggests that spirit and matter are inseparable aspects of this ongoing process.

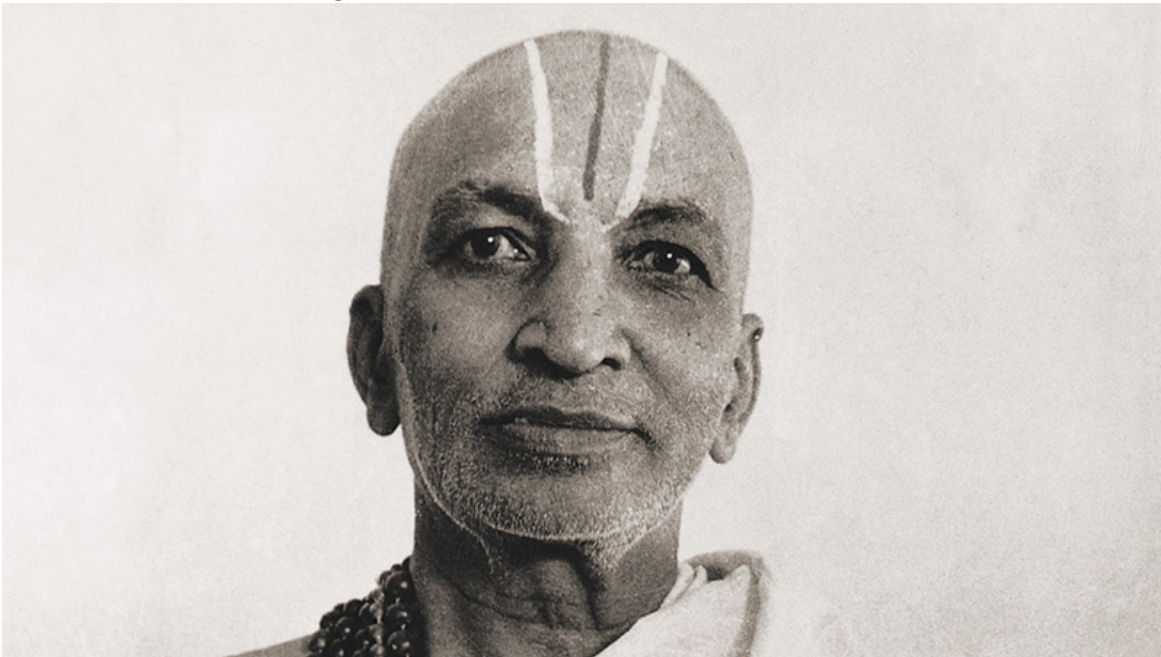
These are just a few examples of Western philosophical perspectives on the spirit-matter relationship. Each tradition offers unique insights and interpretations, contributing to the ongoing exploration of this complex and profound philosophical question.



Chaitanya (1486-1534)

The Most Influential Teachers

Krishnamacharya



From the creation of the Patanjali Sutras and the influence of Hatha Yoga Schools, many yogis and students of the philosophy arose, becoming the most prominent a man named Krishnamacharya, a mystic sage who lived in the Himalayas under the guidance of his Guru and that had a vast knowledge of all yogic disciplines. After spending time in Mysore (India), his reputation of being a learned man in the yogic discipline caught the attention of the King of the province. The King gave him the mission of teaching and creating a school to instruct young boys in Ashtanga yoga, focusing primarily on the physical aspect of the practice to prepare them for rendering service within the Kingdom. This request is how two of the most influential modern yoga teachers, Pattabhi Jois and B.K.S Iyengar, came into contact with Krishnamacharya's Vinyasa Krama Yoga School. He is widely considered as the architect of vinyāsa, in the sense of combining breathing with movement.

The Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga of Pattabhi Jois

The origin of this method is said to be a transmission of yogic knowledge coming from the first known yogic text, the Yoga Korunta, containing lists of asanas grouped into what today we know as the six series of Ashtanga Vinyasa. This practice is traditionally taught in Mysore Style, where each student practices individually with a teacher's overall assistance. In the first series, known as Yoga Chikitsa, the nadis are opened, getting rid of the toxins and relaxing the nervous system. In the second or intermediate series, called Nadi

Shodhana, the focus is on the spine and pelvis, balancing the energy channels throughout the body. In the third or advanced series, strength and balance in posture are mastered. The Vinyasa system is a methodology through which asanas are linked one to another, enhancing the connection between movement and breath.

Iyengar Yoga

From an early age, B.K.S Iyengar had to overcome many diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria, and typhoid fever. He was poor, and his father died at age nine, coming under the care of her sister, who happened to be happily married to Krishnamacharya. After receiving his instruction and being sent to teach in Pune (India), Iyengar became well known for his precise technical alignment in each pose, the prolongation in the holding of the poses, and the use of props such as belts, blocks, chairs, walls, and bolsters. He developed the general idea that asana must be catered to the needs of each individual according to his or her specific constitution and physical condition, making the practice available to everyone and changing the overall view of Hatha Practice worldwide.

Integral Yoga

It was brought into existence by Swami Satchidananda, who only became a genuine student of the yogic discipline after his wife died, taking refuge in the Sannyasa or (renounced order of life). His teachings combined the different aspects of yoga. His primary concern was that too much focus was being drawn into the physical part of the practice (asana) while leaving aside the primordial and underlying concept behind the sequential postures. It proposed that yoga should open the springs of creativity and participate in constructing an educated civilization. It brought together with asana the incorporation of meditation, mantra, service, devotion, and deep study, integrating the significant branches of yoga.

Anusara Yoga

The Anusara Yoga School (AYS) is a modern non-dualistic tantric school created by John Friend. The philosophical aspect of the practice is to open the heart and gracefully align with the supreme. It technically offers insight into practices and principles of alignment such as inner and outer rotation, organic and muscular energy, focal points, and shoulder circuit loop. The school was once one of the fastest-growing schools in the USA and Canada and has several levels of practice and teacher training, also called immersions in their everyday vocabulary.

The Path Of Buddha



Buddhism is a school of thought inspired by the life and teachings of Siddharta Gautama, who was born in Nepal four centuries before the beginning of the Christian calendar.

The story tells that Siddharta was a prince who lived within the confinement of a palace, where he led a comfortable life and was instructed to be the successor of his kingdom.

Siddharta knew nothing about life besides what he was told; therefore, his journey begins when stepping out of the palace and coming in contact with the essence of suffering in the form of death, sickness, old age, and misery.

At the age of twenty-nine, he abandons the palace and goes on the quest for a greater truth that could explain the root of suffering. He goes into the forest and becomes a disciple of different ascetic schools, where he learned various meditation techniques. One of his experiences, when practicing absolute renouncement of the material world, led him to the insight that extreme deprivation and extreme enjoyment can not show the way to liberation; thus, he establishes the concept of the middle path.

After learning this truth, he leaves the company of his fellow ascetic friends and teachers and decides to sit under a fig tree that we know today as the Bodhi Tree, where he sits down and, with firm determination, seeks for the root of all suffering. On this journey, he discovers that all suffering comes from the desires arising from the mind and from the incapability of the mind to deal with impermanence: the law of change.

BUDDHIST CHEATSHEET		
THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH This is the path the Buddha taught to those seeking liberation 1. Right view 6. Right effort 2. Right intention 7. Right mindfulness 3. Right speech 8. Right concentration 4. Right action 5. Right livelihood	THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS This was the Buddha's first and fundamental teaching about the nature of our experience and spiritual potential 1. The existence of suffering 2. The origin of suffering 3. The cessation of suffering 4. The path for the cessation of suffering	THE SEVEN POINTS OF POSTURE Attend to each in turn when you first take your meditation seat. If you become uncomfortable while sitting, you may go through these points again 1. Legs 5. Hands 2. Shoulders 6. Tongue 3. Back 7. Head 4. Eyes
THE SIX WHOLESOME AND UNWHOLESOME ROOTS OF MIND The mind is always under the influence of one of these states 1. Generosity 4. Greed 2. Love 5. Hatred 3. Wisdom 6. Delusion	THE SIX SENSE DOORS AND THREE FEELING TONES Everything we experience comes through these portals 1. Eye (Seeing) 4. Tongue (Tasting) 2. Ear (Hearing) 5. Body (Touching) 3. Nose (Smelling) 6. Mind Experience is felt as one of three tones 1. Pleasant 2. Unpleasant 3. Neutral	THE FOUR METTA PHRASES Send loving kindness to yourself and others by using these phrases or words that have personal meaning for you 1. May I be free from danger 2. May I be happy 3. May I be healthy 4. May I love with ease
THE EIGHT VICISSITUDES According to the Buddha, we will experience these vicissitudes throughout our lives no matter our intentions or actions 1. Pleasure and pain 2. Gain and loss 3. Praise and blame 4. Fame and disrepute	THE FIVE PRECEPTS An ethical life is founded on these standards of conduct To refrain from 1. Killing 2. Stealing 3. Sexual misconduct 4. False, harsh, and idle speech 5. Intoxicants that cloud the mind	THE FOUR BRAHMA-VIHARAS These four "best abodes" reflect the mind state of enlightenment 1. Loving kindness 2. Compassion 3. Joy 4. Equanimity
THE THREE KINDS OF SUFFERING The Buddha taught that we can understand different kinds of suffering through these three categories 1. The suffering of pain 2. The suffering of change 3. The suffering of conditionality	THE FIVE HINDRANCES These are the classical hindrances to meditation practice 1. Desire, clinging, craving 2. Aversion, anger, hatred 3. Sleepiness, sloth 4. Restlessness 5. Doubt	THE SIX STAGES OF METTA Expand your circle of loving kindness by starting with yourself and moving gradually outward 1. Yourself 4. A difficult person 2. A good friend 5. All four 3. A neutral person 6. The entire universe

The Patanjali Sutras

The great sage Patanjali is said to be in the incarnation of Adi Shesha, the lord of snakes, who happened to be the servant and vehicle of Vishnu at the time when he was observing the Rasa-Dance of Lord Shiva. The dance of Lord Shiva made Vishnu very happy, making him dance and, in turn, making his weight unbearable for Adi Shesha to hold himself upright. Vishnu, then feeling sorry for the position of his servant, granted him the blessing to incarnate a human form so that he could perform and express the inner movements within the process of yoga.

During the show, a yogini named Gonika, performing a sacrifice to Surya (the lord sun) asked for the bearing of a child that she had been rejected so far and offered a handful of water in homage to the gods. When she looked back into her hands, she saw a small snake that immediately took the shape of a human form.

The tiny human-shaped snake asked for his mother's blessing, and she happily named him Patanjali. Pata means falling, and Anjali means offering. He became a well-known sage and a fantastic dancer, created his masterpieces known as Yoga Darshans, where he explained the use of correct grammar, shared vast treatises on Ayurveda, and described the eightfold path leading to Samadhi or liberation.

His teachings are part of the knowledge we recognize today as the yoga sutras. The yoga sutras are the most substantial literature written on Raja Yoga and are a primary reference for all yoga students and practitioners worldwide. It consists of four chapters and is composed of 195 sutras or aphorisms. They are meticulously crafted as a thread of thought. They describe the exposition of yoga, the nature of the mind, the obstacles of the practice, and the means to overcome them in the pursuit of liberation.

Chapter 1: Samadhi Padha: Contemplation

Yogas Chitta Vritti Nirodahah

The restraint of the modification of the mind is Yoga.

The mind is composed of Ahamkara (Ego),
Buddhi (Intellect),
and Manas (Desire).

The modifications of the mind disturb inner peace.

“Mana Eva Manusyanam Karanam Bandha Moksayoh”

Bondage and liberation are in your mind. If you feel bound, you are bound. If you feel liberated, you are liberated. Things outside neither bind you nor liberate you—only your attitude towards them.

Then the Seer abides in its own nature.

The seer or the true self assumes the forms of the mental modifications. It reflects and experiences the world through the mind becoming identified with the state in which the mind is at the time being.

There are five kinds of mental modifications:

According to their nature, these modifications are described as painful or painless in relation to being selfish or selfless. When the mind believes something to be real, it projects and protects this apparent truth to reaffirm its own identity, even if it comes from a source of illusion. If you really want to be selfish about something, be selfish about retaining your inner peace.

These modifications are Right Knowledge, Misconception, Verbal Delusion, Sleep, and Memory.

These mental modifications will be restrained by practice and non-attachment. Effort towards steadiness of mind is practice.

It becomes firmly grounded when well attended for a long time, without a break, and in all earnestness.

Let us not be like little children who sow a seed today and dig it up tomorrow to see how much the root went down. We need to cultivate within our practice patience, devotion, and faith.

The consciousness of Self –Mastery in one who is free from cravings from objects seen or heard. That is non – attachment.

Every desire brings a modification within the mind, conditioning the mind to compare it to past experiences, gratifying the ego in the present, and seeking its repetition in the future.

Desires with a sense of detachment for the more significant benefit of all living beings and without any personal interest bring joy and benefit to oneself within the practice, recovering and attaining self-peace.

When the desire does cease by realizing the True Self, liberation or Samadhi is attained. Vairagya or detachment is obtained by reasoning, reflecting, and rejoicing in pure I- am –ness.

Samadhi becomes possible after a person has achieved perfection in concentration and meditation, acquiring one-pointedness.

In the beginning, Samadhi is practiced on the gross objects (savitarka samadhi), on the subtle elements (savicara samadhi), on the mind devoid of objects (sa-ananda samadhi), and finally on the I feeling alone (sa- Asmita samadhi).

The force or prana has three modalities: Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Changes in mind and matter occur whenever there is a disturbance in their equilibrium.

There are two kinds of Samadhi: Samprajnata and Asamprajnata, seeded and seedless. First, we need to understand nature to be released from it.

Asamprajnata Samadhi is attained by faith, vigor, memory, contemplation, and discernment. Time is necessary for success, and this varies according to the intensity of the practice. Liberation is more easily attained by devotion and dedication to Isvara; the supreme self is unaffected by affliction, bondage to the fruits of action, and the impressions from desire.

Isvara is best represented in the reflection upon the meaning of the Pranava, also known as the mantra AUM.

The humming of the name of Brahman, or the brightness within material existence, takes us to the core understanding that everything in this universe is a state of inner vibration, which ultimately manifests as the gross elements we experience in this world. This humming vibration is timeless, with no end and no beginning. From this practice, all the obstacles disappear and simultaneously dawn the knowledge of the inner self.

Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, sensuality, false perception, failure to reach firm ground, and slipping from the ground gained are the

obstacles and distractions of the mind-stuff. These bring in time distress, despair, trembling of the body, and disturbed breathing.

Practicing concentration on a single object or technique is the best way to prevent the obstacles and their accompaniments. By cultivating attitudes of friendliness toward the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in virtue, and disregard toward the wicked, the mind retains its undisturbed calmness. It can also be attained by pranayama, Dharana, and dhyana or by meditating on a great soul that has reached enlightenment. Gradually one's mastery of concentration extends from the smallest particle to the most significant structure within the universe, enabling the yogi's mind to assume the shape and color of the objects placed in front of it. It eliminates the distinction between Knower, Knowable and Known forever, thus reaching Samadhi.

The impression produced by this kind of Samadhi wipes out all other impressions. When even this impression is wiped out, we reach nirbija samadhi or seedless samadhi, thus reaching the state where impressions can never grow back, and the gunas retreat back into nature, therefore understanding that their service has been completed.

Om asatoma sad gamaya Tamasoma Jyotir Gamaya Mrytyor Ma Amritam
Gamaya

Oh lord, let me go from mortality to immortality, from illusion to reality, to the wisdom of not gathering what is impure as pure, impermanent as permanent, and false as truth.

Chapter 2: Sadhana Pada: Practice

Yoga practice is constituted by accepting pain as a help for purification, studying spiritual books, and surrendering to the Supreme Being. They help us minimize obstacles and attain Samadhi.

Tapas means burning, purifying, or creating fire in the same way you would boil water or fire gold to remove the impurities, accepting all the pain that comes to us, even though the nature of the mind is to run after pleasure. Tapas also refers to self-discipline.

There are three kinds of austerities: **Physical** (Worship, purity, straightforwardness, celibacy, and non-injury). **Verbal** when our speech brings tranquility, truthfulness, pleasant, and benefits. **Mental** by studying sacred texts that remind us about the true self.

The five obstacles are ignorance, egoism, attachment, hatred, and clinging to bodily life.

Ignorance is regarding that which is not as truthful (coiled rope as a snake), Egoism is the identification of the unlimited power of God with our own limited capacity, and Attachment is the identification with the pleasurable and Aversion to that which is painful. Clinging to life exists even in the wise out of fear of death and ignorance of our eternal constitution.

These obstacles can be destroyed in the passive form by resolving them to their primal cause, namely the Ego. In the active state, it can be destroyed by meditation.

The womb of karmas has its root in these obstacles, and they bring experience in the seen (present) or unseen (future). The existence of this root brings different species of life, their life span, and their individual experience.

Everything is painful due to its consequences: the anxiety of fear over losing what is gained, the resulting impressions left in the mind that create renewed cravings, and the constant conflict amongst the gunas, which control the mind.

Pleasure ends in pain. Desire and enjoyment should be experienced with a sense of detachment. Nothing lasts forever, and the mind will always seek to repeat pleasurable experiences again and again.

There is a kind of pain that is avoidable by bringing together the Seer's union (Purusa) and the nature of the Seen (Prakriti).

Purusa is the true self, and Prakriti is everything else. We tend to identify ourselves with what is seen and what we possess. This identification with what is seen is the cause of all pain.

The Seen shares its qualities with that of the three Gunas, and its purpose is to provide experiences and liberation to the Purusa.

Nature is here to provide us with experience. In time, this tribulation arising from false identification will bring us through the entanglement of repeated experience (Samsara) to the final conclusion and determination to be at last liberated. Nothing in nature can bring continuous unchanging happiness. Change can only become pleasant when you let it flow without attachment while trying to resist this inevitable change creates displeasure.

The Seer is nothing but the power of seeing, which, although pure, appears to see through the mind. The Seen exists for the sake of the Seer.

Nature is here to give experience, and even though it seems that Purusa is the receptacle of these changes, it only is the witness of the corresponding changes in the mind. The Purusa by no means is the doer or the enjoyer of the habits and tendencies of the mind.

The union of the Owner and the Owned causes the recognition of its own potency and the one of nature due to ignorance. Cultivating uninterrupted discriminative discernment is the method for removing this ignorance that binds them together.

Making a clear distinction between what is ever-changing and what is never changing, we come to the end of the desire to know more, the one to stay away from anything, gain or do anything new.

By the practice of the limbs of Yoga, the impurities dwindle away, and there, dawns the light of wisdom, leading to discriminative discernment.

The Eight Limbs (Ashta- Anga):

1. Yama (abstinences)
2. Niyama (observances)
3. Asana (postures)
4. Pranayama (breathing)
5. Pratyahara (sense withdrawal)
6. Dharana (concentration)
7. Dhyana (meditation)
8. Samadhi (absorption of the infinite)

The Eight Limbs of Yoga	Standard Interpretation	Contemporary Interpretation
1. Yamas	Rules of conduct	Spontaneous evolutionary behavior of conscious beings
2. Niyama	Rules of personal behavior	The internal dialogue of conscious beings
3. Asana	Physical postures	Mind-body integration
4. Pranayama	Breath control	Neurorespiratory integration; awareness and integration of the rhythms, seasons, and cycles of our life
5. Pratyahara	Control of the senses	Tuning into our subtle sensory experiences
6. Dharana	Mind control	Evolutionary mastery and expression of attention and intention
7. Dhyana	Meditation	Resonating at the junction point between the personal and the universal
8. Samadhi	Absorption	Settled in pure awareness; the progressive expansion of the self

Yamas - Restrictions and Restraint

Non-Violence (ahimsa)

- Obvious Sense: Never to harm or demean any living thing.
- Subtle Sense: Overcome tendency to wish harm in any way, e.g., judging others.
- Upon Mastery: All creatures

Non-Violence (ahimsa)

- Obvious Sense: Never to harm or demean any living thing.
- Subtle Sense: Overcome tendency to wish harm in any way, e.g., judging others.
- Upon Mastery: All creatures become harmless in your presence.

Truthfulness (satya, which also means “truth”)

- Obvious: Always be truthful; never say what isn't so with intent to deceive.
- Subtle: Never wish things were different from what they are; absolute self-honesty; cling to highest truths.
- Upon Mastery: Whatever one says will come true.

Non-Stealing (ashteya)

- Obvious: Don't take that which is not yours; material things.
- Subtle: Never desire that which isn't yours, even praise or status or love; never gossip (i.e., try to steal another's good name); see everything as a part of your greater Self.
- Upon Mastery: Whatever you need comes to you when you need it.

Non-Sensuality (brahmacharya, lit. “flowing with Brahma”)

- Obvious: Overindulgence in sense pleasures of all types.
- Subtle: Interiorizing the senses; learning to enjoy God in everything.
- Upon Mastery: Mental clarity and great physical strength; good health on all levels.

Non-Greed (aparigraha)

- Obvious: Letting go of all attachments, even to things that are yours by right.
- Subtle: Non-attachment even to your own body and identity.
- Upon Mastery: Ability to remember former incarnations.

Niyamas - Practices and Observances

Cleanliness (saucha)

- Obvious: Purity of body and environment.
- Subtle: Purity of consciousness/vibration.
- Upon Mastery: Indifference to things of the body; no longer seeking pleasure physically.

Contentment (santosha)

- Obvious and Subtle: Ability to embrace things just as they are.
- Upon Mastery: Unceasing inner happiness, arid realization of bliss in every atom of creation and beyond creation.

Austerity (tapasya)

- Obvious: Self-discipline, simplicity; removal of distractions.
- Subtle: Mastery over likes and dislikes, attained in large part by not giving in to them.
- Upon Mastery: Attainment of various psychic powers (siddhis).

Self-Study (swadhyaya)

- Obvious and Subtle: Introspect objectively about our behavior, motivations, desires, etc.
- Upon Mastery: Ability to commune with beings on higher spheres of existence and to receive their help.

Surrender (Isvara pranidhana)

- Obvious and Subtle: Surrender of the self to God. Acknowledgement that there is a higher principle in the universe than one's own small self. Modesty. Humility.

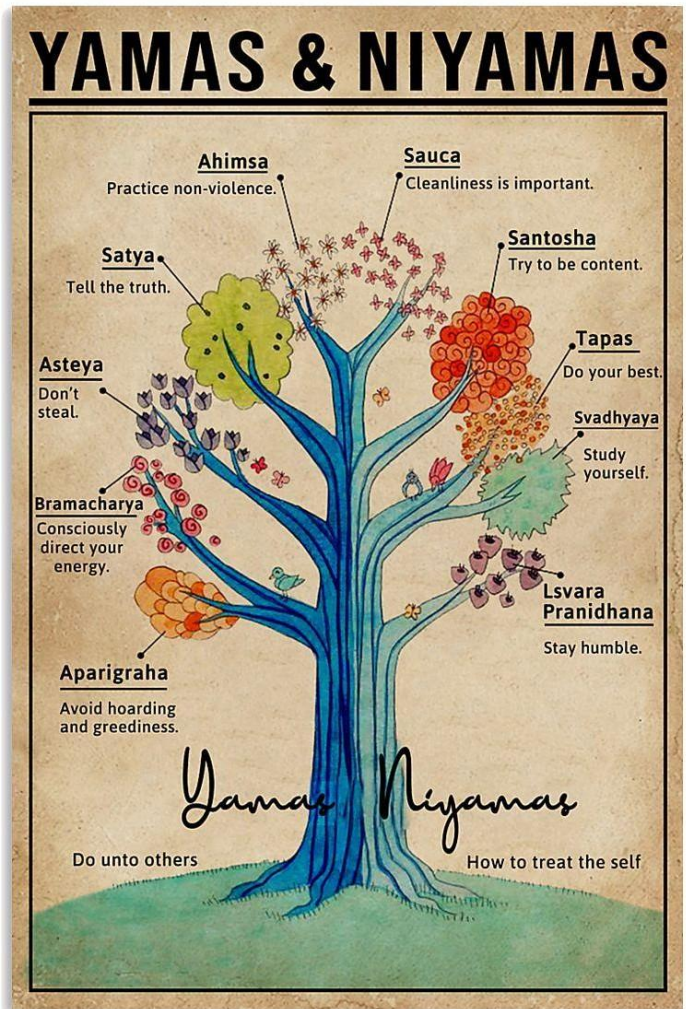
In the presence of the practice of Ahimsa, all hostilities cease. In the presence of Satya, everything which is said becomes true. In Asteya, all wealth comes naturally. In Brahmacharya, vigor and luminosity are gained. From Aparigraha, knowledge about one's birth comes clearly.

In the presence of Sauca, awareness of the vibrational state of all bodies is attained. In the presence of Santosha, supreme joy is gained. By austerity, impurities are removed, and occult powers are gained. By self-study, the connection with a deity or form of worship. By surrendering to God, samadhi is achieved.

Pratipaksa Bhavana is the practice of engaging in opposite thoughts when experiencing negativity. Recognizing this as a result of ignorance and its pain-bearing quality is another way to enhance this quality.

Posture is mastered by lessening the natural tendency for restlessness and meditating on the infinite, becoming unaffected by all forms of duality. When in Asana, Sthira Sukham is attained, the movements of inhalation and exhalation should be controlled (pranayama). As a result, the veil over the inner light is destroyed, and the mind becomes fit for concentration. When the senses withdraw themselves from the objects and become one with the nature of the mind, pratyahara or (mastery over the senses) is experienced.

(Notes taken from Yoga Sutras by Swami Sachidananda)



THE 8 LIMBS OF YOGA – ROYAL PATH TO SELF-REALISATION

Raja Yoga as first compiled and described in the Yoga Sutrās by Patañjali (ca.500 BC)

(Note: Yoga in the West is commonly practised as physical exercise or alternative medicine, rather than as the spiritual self-mastery and meditation skill associated with in the East.)

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
YAMAS Restraints	NIYAMAS Observance	ASANA Postures	PRANAYAMA Breath Balancing	PRATYAHARA Sense Control	DHARANA Concentration	DHYANA Meditation	SAMADHI Ultimate stage of Yoga
1. - 4. serve to prepare the body and mind for 5 - 8.							
1. & 2. clear us, bring peace of mind and help us to evolve: "Character development" is absolutely important. If you are not cleared, you must take higher consciousness into your cells. A disturbed mind will tend to produce disharmonious actions. Meditation is impossible when the clutter of the lower subconscious mind keeps intervening.							
 YAMAS: Self-restraints with focus on the harmonisation of one's social interactions.	 NIYAMA: Disciplines to harmonise one's inner feelings and attitudes.	 ASANA: Performed practices and physical techniques. Even the simplest postures can have a profoundly beneficial effect on all dimensions of a person, helping to release physical and mental tensions.	 PRANAYAMA: "Controlled intake and outflow of breath in a firmly established posture." (Patanjali). While Asanas bring the basic physical and mental health, pranayama is for the purification of the nadis and awakening of Kundalini:	 PRATYAHARA: Drawing the senses inward. Control of senses which requires mastering the flow of prana as that is what drives the senses. As we sense, so we think, and as we think, so we tend to act...	 DHARANA: State of focused attention: mind learns to focus on a single object or thought. Concentration on the space between the eyebrows helps mind control/to keep the body-mind firm. In Dharana, the yogi learns to prevent other thoughts from intruding on focusing awareness.	 DHYANA: Over time Dharana transforms into Dhyana, the state of meditation. gate to Self-realisation.	 SAMADHI: A transcendental state and the highest level of meditation. States of highest consciousness when mind becomes still and one-pointed while the person remains conscious. Entering and maintaining Samadhi initially takes great training and willpower.
Ahimsa: Non-Violence Non-harmful intent/ non-hostility	Shaucha: Cleanliness Purity of all koshas and one's environment/ elimination of samskaras	Asanas: Body poses and conscious breathing for stretching, vitalising, balancing, relaxing... combined with Pranayamas Mudras & Bandhas Mantras Meditation techniques Cleansing practices to regulate Chakras and Nadis, leading to a balanced energy system on physical and mental level. A group of 84 classic yoga asanas is mentioned in several classic texts on yoga.	Prana: Life force, vital breath or cosmic wind Purak: Inhalation Rechak: Exhalation Kumbhach: Holding Prana pervades the individual body in five forms as Prana Vayu/ The 5 Vital Forces: Prana Vayu (forward-breath/moving/raises heart, air, sensory perceptions/organs all ways) Apana Vayu (downward/outward movement/lowers to eliminate waste, dullness and pelvic) Samana Vayu (middle-breath, digestive) Udana Vayu (upward-breath, mental) Vyana Vayu (pervades the body, connects, circulating, connecting/transporting of action)	Sense control is initiated by conscious breathing and concentrated awareness. And not letting external circumstances distract or annoy us. This practice has an aspect of protection from outer elements and preventing leakage outward.	Sattvic (pure) food Seclusion Silence Check also: The 5 Kleshas The 3 Gunas	The purpose of man's life is to realise the Higher Self (or Atman) and merge with Existence/Energy Source/God/Supreme Consciousness. Enlightened Masters have realised this long ago and have devised techniques for others to realise it as well. What is standing in the way of man are the five body sheaths called Koshas . Man's awareness has to be pulled through these in order to reach the Atman or Self. Meditation allows harmonisation of the Koshas, alignment of all Chakras and connection with the Self, in order to become a complete human being.	Savikalpa: One can experience guessing (vitaraka) thought (vicara), bliss (ananda) and self-awareness (asmita). Samskaras are not burned yet, so duality still remains between watching spirit and Higher Self.
Asteya: Honesty Non-stealing/no-debt/ living simply, sincerely/ also don't steal other people's energy	Tapas: Endurance Simplicity of life/stamina and willpower/austerity						
Aparigraha: Non-Possessiveness Non-attachment/ no greed/no cravings	Ishwara Pranidhanani: Cultivation of Faith Surrender of oneself and one's actions to a higher reality						
Bhramacharya: Divine Conduct Continence in desire states	Swadhyaya: Self-Study Gain insight/observe own perceptions						

Sources: Practical Yoga Psychology by Rishi Vivekananda, The Yoga Tradition by Georg Feuerstein, Teaching Yoga by Mark Stephens, The Subtle Energy Body by Maureen Lockart, Mahabharata, Panjat's Yoga Sutras – Diagram: Marina Wörny

Asana & the Energetics

“The next is Asana (posture). The only thing to understand about it is leaving the body free, holding the chest, shoulders, and head straight.” ~ Vivekananda

“The forward fold opens up chakras and back bend brings energy up them” – Goswami Kriyananda

Asanas and the Five Pranas		
INCREASES ENERGY OR PROMOTES THE MOVEMENT OF THE PRANA		
Prana	Inward or forward moving postures	Pranayama
Udana	Upward moving and upright postures	Standing poses, poses that raise the arms or legs or elevate the neck
Vyana	Expanding and releasing postures, postures that promote movement	Extending poses, poses that open the chest, move and stretch the arms and legs
Samana	Contracting and centering postures, postures that reduce movement	Sitting postures, balancing poses like tree pose
Apana	Grounding and stabilizing postures	Sitting and prone postures
DECREASES ENERGY REDUCES THE MOVEMENT OF THE PRANA		
Prana	Outward moving postures	Strong Asanas that create exertion and promote fatigue
Udana	Downward and releasing postures	Prone postures
Vyana	Contracting and centering postures	Bound lotus pose, savasana
Samana	Expanding and releasing postures	Stretching the arms and legs, movement oriented Asanas
Apana	Upward moving poses, postures that counter gravity	Standing postures, particularly with arms directed upward

“Another good principle to remember is that wherever blood flow is increased that particular region and its Prana gets emphasized. In this regard, inverted postures like headstand or forward bends will tend to increase Prana and Udana because they promote the blood flow to the head and neck. This is a more dramatic treatment and such postures should not be done too long or they can create too much pressure in these regions.” – Vamadeva shastri



The Five Vayus

Udana: Neck to Head. Upward movement. It is related to speech, memory, expression, and connection to the outer world.

Prana: Torax. Related to the heart vitality, lungs, and activity of muscles and nerves that activate them. It's the force we use to inhale.

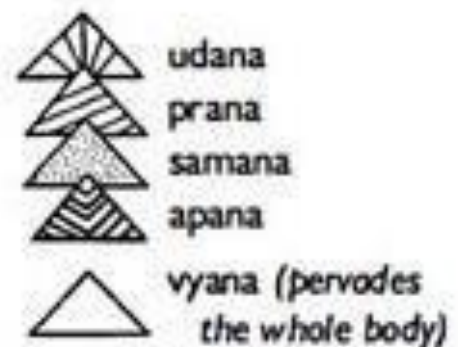
Samana: From heart to navel. It is related to the digestive system and the distribution and absorption of nutrients. Spiritually it is associated with Kundalini Shakti and the expansion of consciousness. It is the time between inhales and exhales.

Apana: Lower abdomen, pelvis to feet. Downward movement. It is related to the excretion and urination process (kidneys, intestines, anus, and genitals). It's the force we use to exhale.

Vyana: It's in the whole body. It is related to movement, nerves, joints, and muscles. It's like a generator.



The Pranic Body



Pranayama

In many classical Sanskrit texts, the term Yoga is used primarily for Pranic practices. The term Hatha Yoga can be used for Pranic Yoga and the term Raja Yoga for the Yoga of meditation. So Yoga and Pranayama are closely related and sometimes equated. Yoga is not just control of the mind but also control of the Prana, which two go together. Mind and Prana are often said to be like the two wings of a bird, with the mind as the power of knowledge and the Prana as the power of action. Both always move and act in accord with each other. Yet Prana has deeper meanings as well.

Prana in the higher sense is the spirit, the awareness that inhabits the body and mind, but transcends them. This higher Prana is much more than the physical breath. It is the great Prana, Maha Prana, which is synonymous with the energy of consciousness, Chit-Shakti.

Energetics of pranayama

Prana is a cosmic force and pervades all of life and nature. Prana is not simply oxygen, which is but a carrier of prana at a physical level, but the very energy of life, and the basis of all other energies in the universe, including those that appear inanimate to us, like the force of gravity.

Pranayama is often regarded as control of the breath or mastery of the breath. When it is a question of control of the breath, the issue arises as to “who is controlling the breath?” If we use the mind or the ego to control the breath, it is not Yoga but a physical exercise. In Yogic Pranayama it is the witnessing consciousness that should be developed as the real master of the breath.

In Yoga, the main means of purification (Shodhana) is Pranayama, which removes physical toxins from the body and emotional toxins from the mind. It does this through the purification of the Nadis, the pranic channels, mainly through alternate nostril breathing.

“But remember to keep a peaceful prana in all that you do. Then all your pranayama practices will work in the best possible manner. The higher Prana is a power of peace, not a power of self-assertion! This unitary prana is best accessed through a deeper peace and surrender of our personal will to the Divine will, and an alignment with our highest Self.” - Frawley

This is particularly important in breath suspension.

Those who practice Pranayama and meditation can easily begin to experience different aspects of Soma. It results in a different type of saliva being secreted in the mouth that follows deep breathing. One should swallow this saliva as it has a special nourishing and revitalizing effect, feeding the fire in the belly.

To facilitate this flow of nectar one should place the tongue on the roof of the mouth during meditation. More specifically the tongue is placed on the roof of the mouth during the inhalation and retention phases of Pranayama.

Prana

All vibrating energies have prana. Prana permeates the whole universe and enables the existence of all animated and in-animated things. Prana has two root words: PRA (constant) and AN (movement). So prana is the continuous movement and vibration of all particles, atoms, cells, and so on.

The universal manifestation of prana is known as Mahaprana. Mahaprana is the great cosmic, divine consciousness, all-encompassing energy that coils and wraps everything. The cosmic manifestation of Mahaprana in the individual body is Kundalini Shakti. This magnanimous (generous) amount of energy is inherent within the matter of Mooladhara Chakra (our root chakra). In the males, it is condensed in the perineum, and in females, in the cervix. It can be released by esoteric practices or plant medicine, and it is commonly associated with spiritual awakening. We can also withdraw the substance of Mahaprana through the breathing process.

It is also possible to find parts of this Mahaprana divided into different compartments in our human body. These compartments/sectors inside the body that keep the life force and control its functioning are called Vayus: Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana, and Vyana. Also, there is a microcosmic manifestation of this primary source, Prana Shakti, which manifest as six main centers or Chakras (psychic centers).

Our physical body has two main types of microcosmic energy: Prana Shakti and Manas/Chitta Shakti (mind and consciousness).

Our Chitta or Consciousness moves through prana. When we work on the expansion of our prana, we are also working on the expansion of our

consciousness. Prana and consciousness are two poles of the same source: The Self. Without prana, there is no consciousness.

So, what is the role of the mind? Sage Patanjali states that the mind cannot be the source of consciousness (as modern psychology states) because it can be perceived as an object.

According to Patanjali Yoga and Jung's psychology, the mind can be classified into three different dimensions: conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. In the yogic terminology, we can learn these as:

1. Conscious mind: Sthula (gross dimension) Jagrit (waking stage) Surface thought and perception of the outside world.
2. Subconscious mind: Sukshma (subtle dimension) Swapna (dream state). Individual memory Samskaras (mental tendencies)
3. Unconscious mind: Karana (casual dimension) Sushupti (deep sleep state). Cosmic collective samskara and memory.

These realms contain man's instinctive, intellectual, psychic, and intuitive aspects. The purpose of Patanjali Yoga is to explore these different mental spheres so that they become known. The aim is to proceed from the conscious to the subconscious and then to the unconscious.

So the mind by itself is a complex object for observation. It has samskaras, fluctuations, latent unexpressed data memories, instinctive reflexes (like digestion or breath), prana, and psychic powers (siddhis).

All the secrets of the universe are in the mind. It contains all knowledge that has existed, now exists, and will exist in the future. From the most subtle to the grossest, it has layer upon layer of expression. The purpose of Yoga is to remove existing restrictions and veils of the individual mind progressively, to explore and unfold its inherent potential, and to gradually shape the individual mind into a perfect instrument and reflector of the cosmic mind of which it is part.

How do you explore all layers of the mind to bring about self-realization and then perfect freedom?.

Here are some hints:

- Cultivating an intense interest in one thing; can be a hobby or work and constitutes occupational therapy.
- Cultivation of positive attitudes towards others.

- Breathe control. Mental disturbances = irregular breathing.
Calm, deep breath = mental tranquility.
- Concentrate on your perception. Music therapy, massage, etc.
- Reflect on a person who has achieved higher states of awareness.
- Dream therapy
- Meditation

All these methods help to purify the mind and allow memories to bubble to the surface and be exhausted.

What is the universal problem of humanity?

Unhappiness.

Where does it come from?

From ignorance of the truth, egoism, attachment, aversion, and fear of death.

Cultivate the opposite, and you will be one step forward into self-realization and freedom.

Prana means life force or vital energy.

Yama means restraint or control

Ayama means expansion or liberation.

Pranayama means the expansion of prana, our life force, in our whole being.

There are many ways in which we can expand our prana. Commonly, pranayama is associated with breathing techniques that help us breathe better and deeper (more profound). Through the practice of pranayama, it is possible to make the breath more efficient by consciously modifying its rate, depth, and quality. But, it goes way beyond that idea.

We can purify our subtle body by controlling, altering, and liberating our breath (Chakras and Nadis). We can balance the mind by bringing concentration and awareness, which helps us cultivate equanimity (calmness) and serenity. Also, it enables us to relax our body just by consciously expanding and contracting the respiratory system.

On the other hand, meditation and visualization techniques can move our prana using only our psyche.

* Keep in mind that you can also expand your prana by just being conscious of your lifestyle choices, like food, thoughts, and interpersonal relationships.

An average person breathes at the rate of 14- 17 times per minute, and most of the work is regulated by our nervous system.

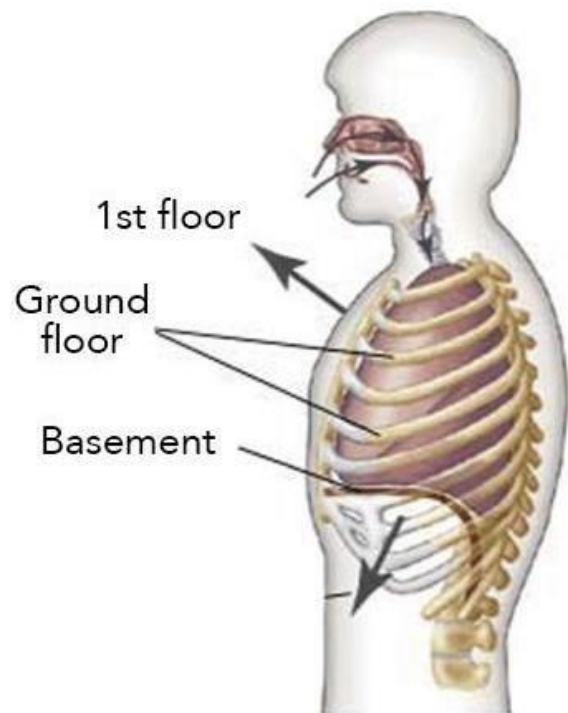
From a scientific point of view, the inhale or intake of air brings fresh oxygen into our bloodstream through the alveoli, a group of hollow sacs from which the lungs are made. Carbon dioxide is released from our cells through the blood into the heart and back to our surroundings during the exhale.

Note: The oxidation of oxygen becomes carbon dioxide.

From an anatomical perspective, on the inhale, the diaphragm placed above the navel, below the lungs and heart, contracts, pushing the organs down and out. Also, the ribcage or thoracic cavity expands. All these open up space for the lungs to expand and absorb the oxygen from the environment. The diaphragm lifts (relaxes) on the exhale, allowing the organs and rib cage to move back to their original shape, helping the lungs to release the air from the intake and come back to its initial stage.

- **The diaphragm:** One big muscle that works as the ground floor. It separates the lungs and heart from the rest of the organs. The significant muscle involved in the healthy functioning of the respiratory system:

- **The intercostal muscles:** Group of muscles between the ribcage. They help with the three-dimensional expansion of the thoracic cavity.
- **Collar bones:** Involved in the breathing process. Represent the shallowest breathing. They are located in the upper lung area.



From an energetical level, the inhale brings into the body the cosmic energy of the universe (Mahaprana), the retention of the air brings the direct experience of its true potential (Prakriti meets Purusha) and the exhale enhances the release of all kinds of cloudy thoughts and emotions (Back to Prakriti).

Pranayama/Yogic Breath,

Also known as Yogic Breathing, is a well-known technique for people who dive into deep waters to hold their breath longer. It consists of becoming aware of the lungs' total capacity and understanding the different parts of the body that need to be enhanced to accomplish a naturally deep, long-lasting breath.

Breath can be divided into three segments:

1. **Abdominal Breathing:** This is closely related to the movement of the diaphragm and is relaxed when floating and connecting the abdomen muscles with the rib cage. When inhalation occurs, the muscle is contracted, pushing the abdominal organs down and creating space for the lower part of the lungs to fill up with fresh oxygen. During exhalation, the diaphragm moves back up, allowing the air to be released in the form of carbon dioxide back to the environment. The diaphragm relaxes, and the visceral organs return to their original state.
2. **Intercostal breathing:** The middle part of the lungs is used for this type of breathing. By inhaling, the ribs move sideways and upwards thanks to the intercostal muscles, creating an expansion of the rib cage. When exhaling, the intercostals contract, and the ribs lower and close, the rib cage returns to a state of rest with the muscles relaxed. It spends more energy than diaphragmatic breathing for the same amount of air exchanged. It is more associated with the breathing we use when doing exercises, just like the one we have when we are stressed or tense. If combined with abdominal breathing, it helps the body get more oxygen. It is important to emphasize that in a situation of a lot of stress, it is advisable to change this type of breathing to an abdominal one and train to cut the bad habits regarding our respiration.
3. **Clavicular breathing:** It is the final level of the total expansion of the rib cage. It happens when the thoracic breath reaches its limit. It is extra oxygen that enters our lungs. For this, the upper part of the ribs and collar bones move upwards with the help of the neck, throat, and sternum muscles. This type of breathing is used under conditions of extreme physical exertion or when there is an obstruction in the respiratory tract due to some disease such as asthma. Under this type of situation, the breathing becomes superficial and tense. Not enough oxygen enters the body, and there is a great feeling of anxiety.

The pranayamic (yogic) breath suggests reaching the maximum capacity of the lungs by using the 3/3 of our lungs, starting with the inhalation from the

diaphragm by previously engaging the abdominal region, then allowing expansion of the intercostal muscles between the ribs, and finally allowing the sensation of this incoming breath to reach high into the clavicles.

Energetic Pathways

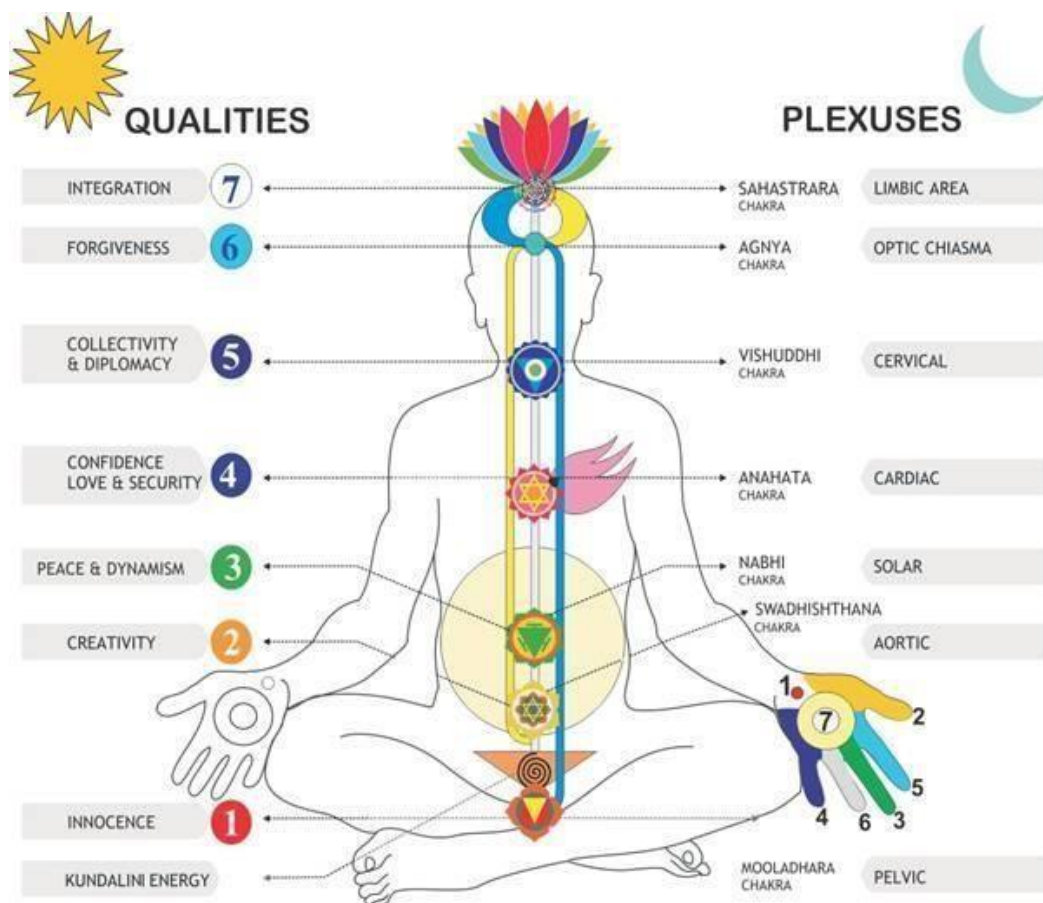
Prana, the tangible manifestation of the higher self, flows through various energy pathways. We have around 72,000 energy pathways.

This fact correlates with Chinese and Indian science. Amongst these, there are three most important ones:

- Ida Nadi — left channel, passive, lunar, governed by feminine energy, right hemisphere, subjective, intuitive, negative, cold, yin, PNS.
- Pingala — right channel, active, solar, governed by masculine energy, left hemisphere, objective, logical, positive, warm, yang, SNS.

When these two channels meet a free and organic flow in which the chakras are unblocked and allow the prana to flow, a third Nadi, Sushumna, is activated:

- Sushumna Nadi — (the channel that runs through the body's center), the modular spine. When this channel is activated, the subtle energy kundalini (shakti) runs from the base of the body (Kunda) to the tip of the skull (Sahasrara chakra).



The three Bodies & the five Koshas

The Upanishads represent another essential piece of Vedic literature. First stated is the belief in an eternal relation between the universal spirit (Brahman) and the individual soul (Atma). Also bringing into the picture the idea that the body is composed of three bodies:

Karya Sarira:

The Physical Body is composed of earth, water, fire, air, and ether

Sukshma Sarira

The Subtle Body is composed of 19 elements, such as mind, intellect, and ego.

Karana Sarira

The causal body of Eternity, Knowledge, and Joy.

Another approach to the different bodies is given by the 5 Koshas or layers covering the jiva atma where Sat Cit Ananda resides.

Annamaya kosha: the physical body

Pranamaya kosha: the physiological body

Manomaya kosha: the psychological body

Vijnamaya kosha: the intellectual body

Anandamaya kosha: the subtle body

These layers are said to be removed by the fire created by the practice that burns the different impurities that keep us from our true nature.

Panchakosha

“Pancha means five and kosha are the sheaths of the spirit body. Annamaya kosha (physical sheath) is feed by food and contains the physical elements in our body primarily as the main dhatus and malas. Pranamaya kosha (the pranic sheath) is feed by prana and contains the prana in the body and assists movement and function in the body. Manomaya kosha (the mind sheath) is feed by the senses and contains our sense organs, and our inner dialogue of thoughts and experience of emotions. The Vijnanamaya kosha (intellect sheath) is feed by the intellect contains our discrimination from the level of our thought to the level of our senses. The Anandamaya kosha is feed by bliss and contains the subtle source of all of these things as well as our experience of yogic union.

Pancha kosha yoga is a union with the various sheaths through yogic practice.

Pancha kosha ayurveda balances the various sheaths through ayurvedic practice.

Annamaya kosha (physical sheath) is treated through asana and ayurvedic therapies.

Pranamaya kosha (the pranic sheath) is effected primarily through pranayama, inhaled therapies and nasya. It can also be assisted by treating kapha such as in the vamana process of ayurveda.

Manomaya kosha (the mind sheath) is effected by mantra and meditation.

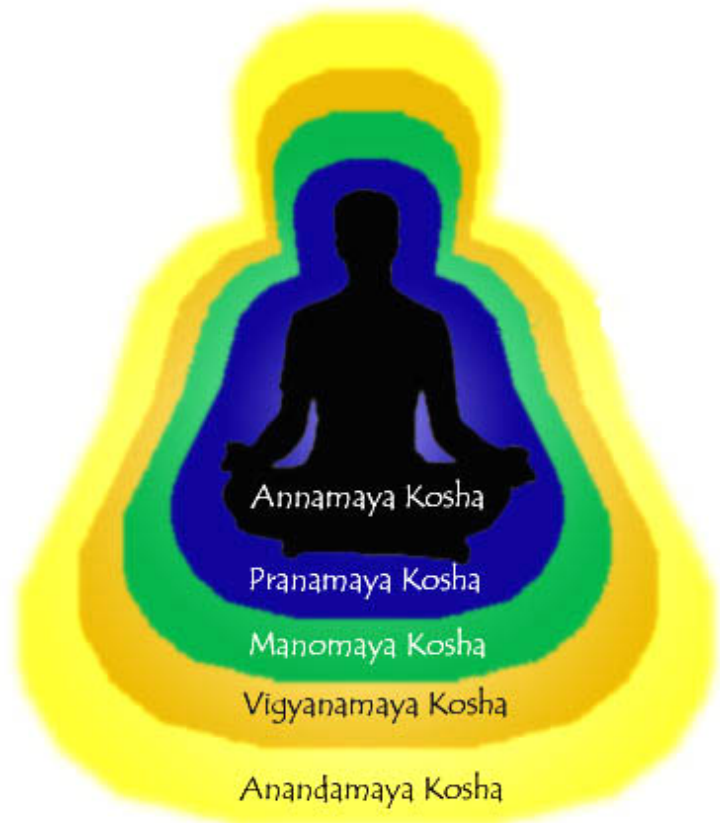
Vijnanamaya kosha (intellect sheath) and anandamaya kosha is effected by dyhana, dharana and drishti as well as by laughter yoga!

There are many wonderful nervine herbs like Jatamansi which can help to relax manomaya kosha and there are also many Soma herbs to assist in strengthening anandamaya kosha.

In the subtle body we are thinking and feeling. The breath is amazing for calming the emotions and stilling the mind. It allows us to disperse prana through the body which we take in at the heart. Focusing energy and affirmation on our own heart is very good for the subtle body as the heart centers prana and is the seat of emotions. Having devotional love present in the practice greatly enhances and elevates prana. Pranayama is highly recommended and can be even more effective when done in nature. Even shamanic methods like smudging, clearing with the breath and giving ceremonial offerings, prayers and intentions to the sacred can be of great healing. Having a sangha that one feels close to is a major factor in psychological balance. They are validating the importance of community for emotional health in studies done at the positive psychology department in Harvard.

THE KOSHAS

The Five Sheaths of the Human Being



The causal body contains the momentum of a soul from numerous incarnations. This is contained in the anandamaya kosha or bliss sheath and the vijñananamaya kosha or intellect sheath. Healing can be imparted to this body through jyotish (astrology) and meditation. The astrological chart can show the tendencies for a soul and can offer many different healing options for balance. Propitiating a certain planet with mantra, mudra, yantra, gem, metal and color worship as well as working with the associated devas can help shift these energies in a positive way. Meditating on the true self as infinite will also help to connect with source more than past life karmas. Doing karma yoga can help as well as fasting on the day of the week related to the planet to propitiate. Feeding hungry people or animals that planetary day of the week is also helpful for healing the causal body and its karma.” ~ Sebastian Hansen

Some Breathing Techniques

Diaphragmatic, thoracic, clavicular Lungs expansion

Ujjayi: Victorious breath. Contraction of the throat, hissing sound.

Ashvini Mudra: Pumping the energy from root to crown.

Nadi Shodana: Alternate Nostril breathing. Balancing.

Kapala Bhati: Shining skull. Focus on exhaling at the solar plexus. Fire.

Bhastrika: Deep, fast inhale/exhale. Fire

Agnisara Dauti: Fire Wash. pumping the belly on exhale.

Breath and heart synch

Prana Vidya: the movement of prana by using the psyche.

Pratyahara



“The term pratyahara is composed of two Sanskrit words, prati and ahara. Ahara means "food," or "anything we take into ourselves from the outside." Prati is a preposition meaning "against" or "away."

Pratyahara means literally "control of ahara," or "gaining mastery over external influences."

It is compared to a turtle withdrawing its limbs into its shell --- the turtle's shell is the mind and the senses are the limbs. The term is usually translated as "withdrawal from the senses," but much more is implied.

In yogic thought there are three levels of ahara, or food. The first is physical food that brings in the five elements necessary to nourish the body. The second

is impressions, which bring in the subtle substances necessary to nourish the mind --- the sensations of sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell. The third level of ahara is our associations, the people we hold at heart level who serve to nourish the soul and affect us with the gunas of sattva, rajas, and tamas.

Pratyahara is twofold. It involves withdrawal from wrong food, wrong impressions and wrong associations, while simultaneously opening up to right food, right impressions and right associations. We cannot control our mental impressions without right diet and right relationship, but pratyahara's primary importance lies in control of sensory impressions which frees the mind to move within.” - David Frawley

“Pratyahara itself is termed as Yoga, as it is the most important limb in Yoga Sadhana.” -Swami Shivananda

“When separated from their corresponding objects, the organs follow the nature of the mind.” – Sutra 2.54

“One who is self-controlled, even though moving among the objects, attains peace since the senses remain under control and free from attraction.” – Bhagavad Gita

“Silence is power.” – African proverb



"Many of us find that even after years of meditation practice we have not achieved all that we expected. Trying to practice meditation without some degree of pratyahara is like trying to gather water in a leaky vessel. No matter how much water we bring in, it flows out at the same rate. The senses are like holes in the vessel of the mind. Unless they are sealed, the mind cannot hold the nectar of truth. Anyone whose periods of meditation alternate with periods of sensory indulgence is in need of pratyahara.

As the fifth of the eight limbs, pratyahara occupies a central place. Some yogis include it among the outer aspects of yoga, others with the inner aspects. Both classifications are correct, for pratyahara is the key between the outer and inner aspects of yoga; it shows us how to move from one to the other." ~ Frawley

Have you ever taken a class in pratyahara? Have you ever seen a book on pratyahara? Can you think of several important pratyahara techniques? Do you perform pratyahara as part of your yogic practices? If we don't understand pratyahara, we are missing a cornerstone of yoga which is required for the system to work.

4 Kinds of Pratyahara

- Control of the senses
- Control of the prana
- Control of action
- Withdrawal of the mind

("Pratyahara" Excerpt from David Frawley)

1. Control of the Senses (Indriya-pratyahara)

Indriya-pratyahara, or control of the senses, is the most important form of pratyahara, although this is not something that we like to hear about in our mass media-oriented culture. Most of us suffer from sensory overload, the result of constant bombardment from television, radio, computers, newspapers, magazines, books --- you name it. Our commercial society functions by stimulating our interest through the senses. We are constantly confronted with bright colors, loud noises and dramatic sensations. We have been raised on every sort of sensory indulgence; it is the main form of entertainment in our society.

The problem is that the senses, like untrained children, have their own will, which is largely instinctual in nature. They tell the mind what to do. If we don't discipline them, they dominate us with their endless demands. We are so accustomed to ongoing sensory activity that we don't know how to keep our minds quiet; we have become hostages of the world of the senses and its allurements. We run after what is appealing to the senses and forget the higher goals of life. For this reason, pratyahara is probably the most important limb of yoga for people today.

Right Intake of Impressions

Pratyahara centers on the right intake of impressions. Most of us are careful about the food we eat and the company we keep, but we may not exercise the same discrimination about the impressions we take in from the senses. We accept impressions via the mass media that we would never allow in our personal lives.

Strong sensations dull the mind, and a dull mind makes us act in ways that are insensitive, careless, or even violent.

According to Ayurveda, sensory impressions are the main food for the mind. The background of our mental field consists of our predominant sensory impressions. We see this when our mind reverts to the impressions of the last song we heard or the last movie we saw. Just as junk food makes the body toxic, junk impressions make the mind toxic. Junk food requires a lot of salt, sugar, or spices to make it palatable because it is largely dead food; similarly junk impressions require powerful dramatic impressions --- sex and violence --- to make us feel that they are real, because they are actually just colors projected on a screen.

We cannot ignore the role sensory impressions play in making us who we are, for they build up the subconscious and strengthen the tendencies latent within it. Trying to meditate without controlling our impressions pits our subconscious against us and prevents the development of inner peace and clarity.

Sensory Withdrawal

Fortunately we are not helpless before the barrage of sensory impressions. Pratyahara provides us many tools for managing them properly. Perhaps the simplest way to control our impressions is simply to cut them off, to spend some time apart from all sensory inputs. Just as the body benefits by fasting from food, so the mind benefits by fasting from impressions. This can be as

simple as sitting to meditate with our eyes closed or taking a retreat somewhere free from the normal sensory bombardments, like at a mountain cabin. Also a "media fast," abstaining from television, radio, etc. can be a good practice to cleanse and rejuvenate the mind.

Another method of sense withdrawal is to keep our sense organs open but withdraw our attention from them. In this way we cease taking in impressions without actually closing off our sense organs. The most common method, shambhavi mudra, consists of sitting with the eyes open while directing the attention within, a technique used in several Buddhist systems of meditation as well. This redirection of the senses inward can be done with the other senses as well, particularly with the sense of hearing. It helps us control our mind even when the senses are functioning, as they are during the normal course of the day.

Focusing on Uniform Impressions

Another way to cleanse the mind and control the senses is to put our attention on a source of uniform impressions, such as gazing at the ocean or the blue sky. Just as the digestive system gets short-circuited by irregular eating habits and contrary food qualities, our ability to digest impressions can be deranged by jarring or excessive impressions. And just as improving our digestion may require going on a mono-diet, like the ayurvedic use of rice and mung beans (kicharee), so our mental digestion may require a diet of natural but homogeneous impressions. This technique is often helpful after a period of fasting from impressions.

Creating Positive Impressions

Another means of controlling the senses is to create positive, natural impressions. There are a number of ways to do this: meditating upon aspects of nature such as trees, flowers, or rocks, as well as visiting temples or other places of pilgrimage which are repositories of positive impressions and thoughts. Positive impressions can also be created by using incense, flowers, ghee lamps, altars, statues, and other artifacts of devotional worship.

Creating Inner Impressions

Another sensory withdrawal technique is to focus the mind on inner impressions, thus removing attention from external impressions. We can create our own inner impressions through the imagination or we can contact the subtle senses that come into play when the physical senses are quiet.

Visualization is the simplest means of creating inner impressions. In fact, most yogic meditation practices begin with some type of visualization, such as "seeing" a deity, a guru, or a beautiful setting in nature. More elaborate visualizations involve imagining deities and their worlds, or mentally performing rituals, such as offering imaginary flowers or gems to imagined deities. The artist absorbed in an inner landscape or the musician creating music are also performing inner visualizations. These are all forms of pratyahara because they clear the mental field of external impressions and create a positive inner impression to serve as the foundation of meditation. Preliminary visualizations are helpful for most forms of meditation and can be integrated into other spiritual practices as well.

Laya Yoga is the yoga of the inner sound and light current, in which we focus on subtle senses to withdraw us from the gross senses. This withdrawal into inner sound and light is a means of transforming the mind and is another form of indriya-pratyahara.

2. Control of the Prana (Prana-Pratyahara)

Control of the senses requires the development and control of prana because the senses follow prana (our vital energy). Unless our prana is strong we will not have the power to control the senses. If our prana is scattered or disturbed, our senses will also be scattered and disturbed.

Pranayama is a preparation for pratyahara. Prana is gathered in pranayama and withdrawn in pratyahara. Yogic texts describe methods of withdrawing prana from different parts of the body, starting with the toes and ending wherever we wish to fix our attention --- the top of the head, the third eye, the heart or one of the other chakras.

Perhaps the best method of prana-pratyahara is to visualize the death process, in which the prana, or the life-force, withdraws from the body, shutting off all the senses from the feet to the head. Ramana Maharshi achieved Self-realization by doing this when he was a mere boy of seventeen. Before inquiring into the Self, he visualized his body as dead, withdrawing his prana into the mind and the mind into the heart. Without such complete and intense pratyahara, his meditative process would not have been successful.

3. Control of Action (Karma-Pratyahara)

We cannot control the sense organs without also controlling the motor organs. In fact the motor organs involve us directly in the external world. The impulses coming in through the senses get expressed through the motor organs and this drives us to further sensory involvement. Because desire is endless, happiness consists not in getting what we want, but in no longer needing anything from the external world.

Just as the right intake of impressions gives control of the sense organs, right work and right action gives control of the motor organs. This involves karma yoga --- performing selfless service and making our life a sacred ritual. Karma-pratyahara can be performed by surrendering any thought of personal rewards for what we do, doing everything as service to God or to humanity. The Bhagavad Gita says, "Your duty is to act, not to seek a reward for what you do." This is one kind of pratyahara. It also includes the practice of austerities that lead to control of the motor organs.

4. Withdrawal of the Mind (Mano-Pratyahara)

The yogis tell us that mind is the sixth sense organ and that it is responsible for coordinating all the other sense organs. We take in sensory impressions only where we place our mind's attention. In a way we are always practicing pratyahara. The mind's attention is limited and we give attention to one sensory impression by withdrawing the mind from other impressions. Wherever we place our attention, we naturally overlook other things.

We control our senses by withdrawing our mind's attention from them.

According to the Yoga Sutras II.54: "When the senses do not conform with their own objects but imitate the nature of the mind, that is pratyahara."

More specifically, it is mano-pratyahara --- withdrawing the senses from their objects and directing them inward to the nature of the mind, which is formless. Vyasa's commentary on the Yoga Sutra notes that the mind is like the queen bee and the senses are the worker bees. Wherever the queen bee goes, all the other bees must follow. Thus mano-pratyahara is less about controlling the senses

than about controlling the mind, for when the mind is controlled, the senses are automatically controlled.

We can practice mano-pratyahara by consciously withdrawing our attention from unwholesome impressions whenever they arise. This is the highest form of pratyahara and the most difficult.

Yoni Mudra



Yoni mudra is one of the most important pratyahara techniques for closing the senses. It involves using the fingers to block the sensory openings in the head --- the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth --- and allowing the attention and energy to move within. It is done for short periods of time when our prana is energized, such as immediately after practicing pranayama.

(Naturally we should avoid closing the mouth and nose to the point at which we starve ourselves of oxygen.)

“The one religion is beyond all speech.” ~ Ghandi

“What invisible wind brings weakness and wanders without end? Indulgence in babble and chatter devoid of any meaning.” ~ The 7th Dalai Lama (Gems of Wisdom)

Dharana

- “How are we to know that the mind has become concentrated? Because the idea of time will vanish. The more time passes unnoticed the more concentrated we are. When the past and present come and stand in one, the mind is said to be concentrated.” ~ Vivekananda
- “It is only the unitary prana that can enter into the Sushumna or the central channel and opens the chakras, unfolding their powers. As long as we are caught in the dualistic prana, the Kundalini lays asleep and dormant at the base of the spine, and the chakras are closed, working only at outer level to sustain our outer existence, not affording steady access to higher states of consciousness.



One can activate this unitary prana directly through the unitary awareness if one has the ability to create a strong focused meditation, but that is relatively rare. Pratyahara is also linked with dharana. In pratyahara we withdraw our attention from ordinary distractions. In dharana we consciously focus that attention on a particular object, such as a mantra. Pratyahara is the negative and dharana the positive aspect of the same basic function.” - David Frawley

Ayurvedic Dharana

- Trataka and sensory Dharana
- Dharana of the body
- Prana dharana
- Mantra dharana
- Medicine dharana
- Dosha dharana
- Jyotish (astrology) dharana

Dharana techniques usually focus on the five elements.

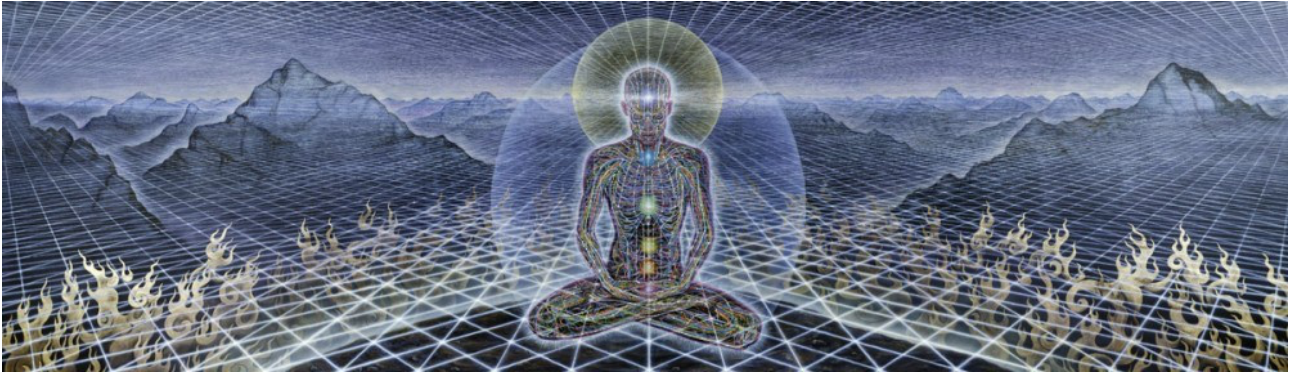
“Through Dharana on the gross elements, one can become aware of the subtle elements. You can start with a rock for the earth element. Meditate upon its shape, color, hardness, texture and its connection with other rocks, the mineral kingdom and the Earth in general. In this manner, the rock will gradually unfold for you all the potentials of the earth element to produce mountains, valleys, plains and other land formations, not only on this planet but also on other planets.

Whatever we give Dharana to we make strong and give support. Dharana literally means to support or uphold. Dharana of the body gives strength to the body. Dharana of the Prana gives strength to the Prana. Dharana of the senses makes the senses more acute. Dharana of the mind makes the mind more perceptive.

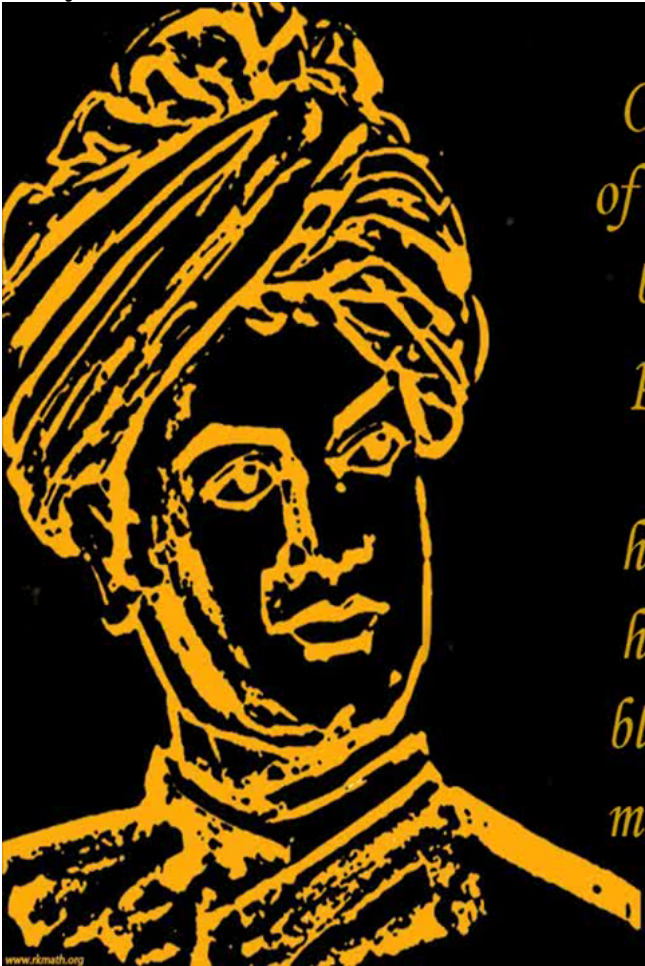
- Dharana means to do everything wholeheartedly. A Yogi should always practice Yoga-Dharana. They should maintain their attention in Yoga. This requires a background attention on Yoga whatever else we may do, which requires steady will, purpose and motivation in practice. “ ~ D. Frawley

Now that the mind is focused in dharana, we can direct this energy into meditation.

Dhyana

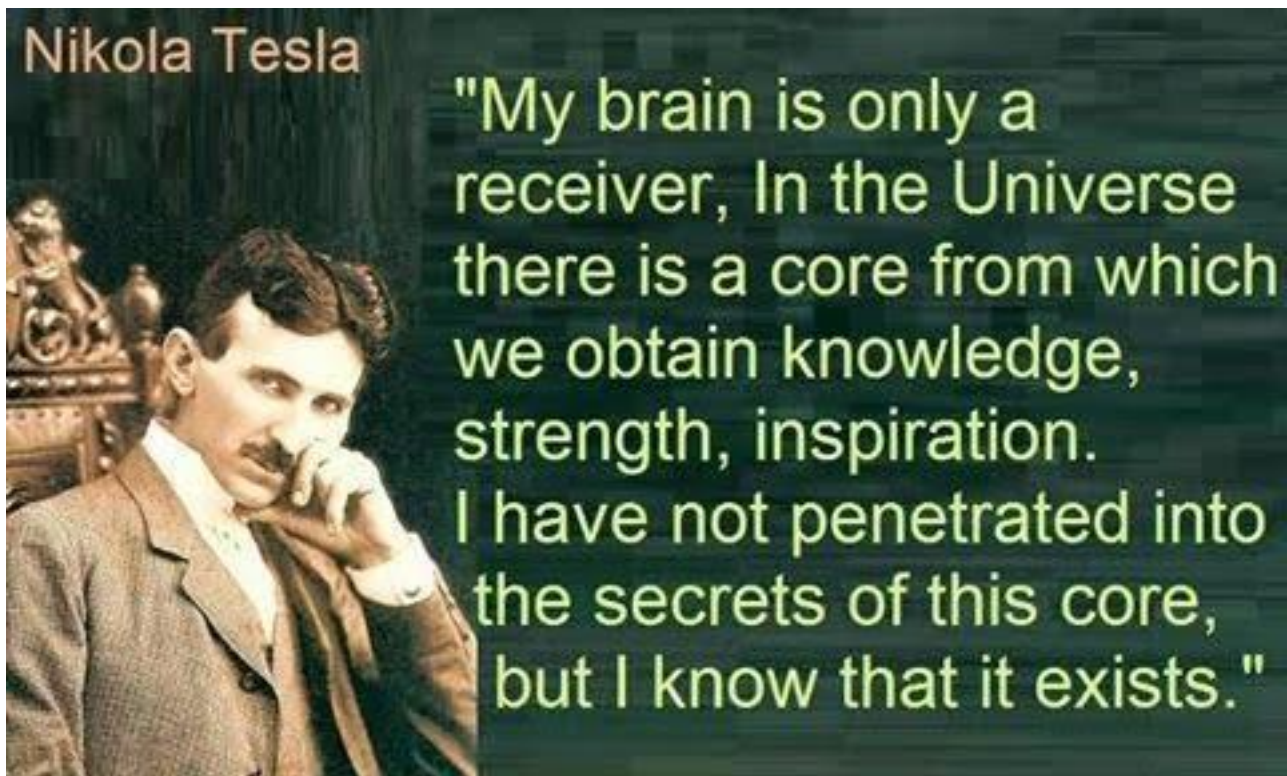


“Real meditation (Dhyana) is not possible without having first developed the power of attention (Dharana). If we cannot hold the mind at a particular place (Dharana), we cannot develop any real perception or awareness there (Dhyana).”



Concentration is the essence of all Knowledge; nothing can be done without it. Ninety percent of thought force is wasted by the ordinary human being, and therefore he is constantly committing blunders; the trained man or mind never makes a mistake.

Meditation depends upon the focused mind as its instrument. There is no real meditation for the wandering or distracted mind. Merely sitting and wallowing in our disturbed thoughts is not meditation. Meditation is not a blank mind either, with no particular thought or focus to guide us. Meditation begins with a concentrated mind and with focus on a particular object or inquiry. So we should teach concentration before meditation.” - Frawley



“Don Jose Campos could understand foreign languages while in a trance.” – Rebecca R Stone.

Meditation in Ayurveda

Meditation is great for soothing and nourishing nervous conditions of vata or calming and cooling heated conditions of pitta. Meditation isn't quite as important for kapha because they are already relaxed and cooled and can often be overnourished. Meditation is great for psychological disorders of vata but they can have trouble focusing. It is wonderful how well pitta can focus for meditation and their meditations can be particularly healing in ayurvedic treatment when following appropriate themes and sensory input. Meditation is a great to thing to prescribe for people when they are in hospitalized care and can not recieve herbal medicine. Meditation is also great for invoking higher awareness and is an important adjunct to the routine of healthy people who are pursuing refinement and greater balance.

Vata meditation would involve a calm mantra like "stroom" or a protective mantra like "hum" or "om". Walking meditation and meditating in nature helps to calm vata and being near water is great as long as one stays warm enough (ram helps) and doesn't get overheated to the point of drying out (vam is a helpful mantra for this). Nadi shodhana is a wonderful technique to relax vata. Taraka is a great meditation for vata as long as one doesn't get too close or dry out from the proximity or inhale lots of smoke. A candle could be

best for taraka. Gentle music is a great adjunct to vata meditation and using soothing colors like green, lavender, white or gold can help as well. Being away from media and loud environmental sounds is best. Bringing in the love of devotion and the flow of prana into the heart is very nourishing to vata. Prayer to hanuman who is born of the wind as well as propitiation of Saturn is healing for vata.

Pitta types do well with zen meditation, passive gazing, silent meditation, self inquiry or imagining calming scenes in nature as this gives their strong power of perception something to focus on and is cooling at the same time. Cooling breath out of the mouth is very good as well as relaxing nadi shodhana. Meditation in nature can be very good, especially near a body of water. Devotional meditation to the goddess brings in a sweet water element and propitiation of mars can help to balance that fire of will and ego. Shrim strim and om are helpful to lower pitta and ram can help if the fire needs to be purified.

Kapha types need to be motivated in their practice. This can be done with energizing mantras like ram or ksam. The bija mantra to narasimha can help, ksraum. Bhakti kirtan can help them to be engaged in practice. Taraka is great or meditating on the rising or setting sun. Agnihotra, a special kind of fire homa, occurs during the sunrise or sunset and is very good for kapha types. They can then enjoy the parad ash made from the cow dung, ghee and grains of rice. This parad ash is a wonderful medicine for kapha. Kapha types do well to focus on lighting the inner fire within and accepting that they are beyond limitation. Kapha benefits from positive affirmations about their self definition in meditation. Devotional meditation on the beloved will help open up prana flow in the heart which can help motivate kapha. Stronger pranayam is recommended like bhasrika and kapalabhati. - basti
Samadhi

Samadhi is achieved through the yogic method. Samadhi is complete union with that which is observed. It brings us to a direct perception of reality which reveals divinity, joy and fulfillment.

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* defines Samadhi in three important verses:

- IV. 4. Just as salt dissolved in water becomes the same as the water, so Samadhi is the oneness of the mind and the Self.
- IV. 5. When the Prana is dissolved, then the mind is dissolved. Then that state of equal harmony is called Samadhi.

- IV. 6. Samadhi is the oneness and equality of the individual Self and the Supreme Self, when all desires are destroyed.

“Yoga in the higher sense is the development of Samadhi or the ‘absorbed state of mind’, in which the mind becomes one with its object of attention. If we practice yogic meditation, we will naturally develop some states of Samadhi. Most of what are called spiritual experiences are Samadhi experiences, though not all are the result of a conscious practice or preparation.” - Frawley

“By virtue of samādhi, the yogin finally passes permanently beyond the human condition – which is dramatic, produced by suffering and consummated in suffering – and at last obtains total freedom.” 799 – Mircea Eliade

“It is this knowledge alone which the Yogin considers to be supremely real.”
865 – Dasgupta, Yoga Psychology

“When mind is still, then truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence.” ~ Sri Aurobindo

“Man the microcosm, is homologous with the macrocosm.” ~ Mircea Eliade

Yet there are many types of Samadhi. Samadhi is a function of the mind on all levels. We are all seeking some Samadhi or peak experience of the mind, heart and senses. In this regard, there are both yogic and non-yogic samadhis. Even sleep or drug induced trances are lower or non-yogic Samadhis. Mixed Samadhis are common among yoga aspirants, in which some inner vision gets mixed with the conditioning of the mind. Without the proper training, such Samadhi experiences, even when genuine, can disturb people or inflate the ego.

Samadhi and its 3 forms

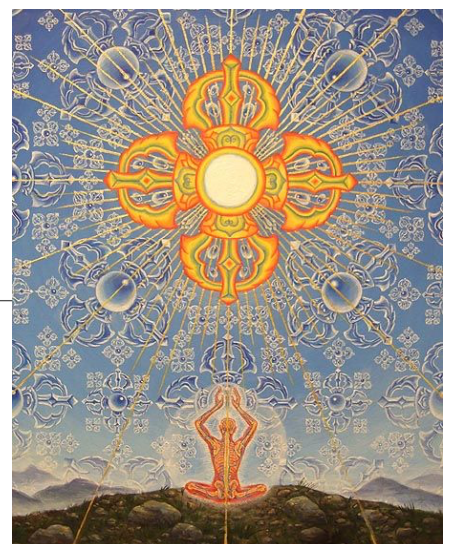
- Salvikalpa
- Nirvikalpa
- Sahaja Nirvikalpa



“Traditional Yoga classifies different types of Samadhis, some of which it regards as illusory, misleading or dangerous. It particularly warns us to avoid using any siddhis or powers that arise from Samadhi for our own personal ends, especially those that involve harming others. It asks us to pursue the Samadhis that involve control of the mind and the understanding of our deeper Self.” ~ Frawley

Salvikalpa

Samskaras are not burned yet, so duality still remains.



Nirvikalpa

Ardhanarishvara – Shiva/Shakti - (Art by George Atherton. ♀)

Duality is gone.

Rooting into earth while connecting with solar principle. Connecting purusha and prakriti.



Sahaja Nirvikalpa

~ Krisna with Arjuna



Samadhi is retained while one interacts in the world.

Through Samadhi we are initiated into a threefold awareness. We see that there is one existence which unites our spiritual search with the rest of life. We see that the goal of yoga is to achieve the bliss of spiritual fullness. We see that we have existed in many lifetimes and are immortal and can live each moment in eternity. – Frawley

A feeling of Unity

“I felt myself ball up and become the earth. I felt rooted in some tangled, steamy jungle, rich with the scent of death and rebirth, slowly becoming one with the vines and the very earth itself.

As a field of light saturates my being, I perceive the back of my skull lifting up, allowing a current of energy, the vegetable energy of the earth, to stream

through me. I dissolve and merge into the harmonious, welcoming vibrations of the plant world.... The particles of my being are one with the flowers, the trees, the elements. I am planted in the ground, taking root, becoming one with nature.” ~ Metzger 2006

“Revelations of oneness and universal consciousness are often based on a further understanding that all things are alive and sacred, that seemingly separate unrelated events appeared to be inextricably interrelated and that not only is all of humanity interconnected, but everything is. One visionary concludes, “All humans are divine children”. Paradox, too, can be resolved: “It was as if my body accepted ideas of oneness, duality, paradox, etc., on a cellular level. I became aware of the nature of illusions and the difficulty and impossibility of paradox. I became aware of the phrase “we are less than we think we are.” ~ The Jaguar Within – Rebecca R stone

“In nature, whole encloses the parts, and yet a larger whole encloses the whole enclosing the parts. By enlarging our field of view, what is thought of as a whole, becomes, in fact, nothing more than one part of a larger whole. Yet another whole encloses this whole in a concentric series that continues on to infinity.” – Masanobu Fukuoka

Drishti

Drishti - placement of gaze controls energy movement.

The eyes particularly connect to the fire element as our sense of sight is the fire element expressed as a sense organ. Closing our eyes, as in pratyahara, will bring this energy inward and allows for greater Self awareness.



Drishti is the point of gaze within the practice. This gaze ensures concentration and defines where the energy moves in each asana. For example, when lifting the arms, the energy moves up, so the gaze goes up into your hands; when

bending forward, the gaze goes down towards the toes; when twisting, the gaze goes back over the shoulder; in standing postures, the gaze is forward.

Note: The Drishtis, even though they imply looking outward with your physical eyes, is about bringing the Dharana or concentration inwards.

Here is a list of the eight types of Drishti:

1. Nasagrai - Tip of the nose.
2. Ajna Chakra - Between the eyebrows.
3. Nabhi Chakra – Navel
4. Hastagrai – Hands
5. Padhayograi – Toes
6. Parsva Drihti - Far to the side
7. Augusta Ma Dyai – Thumbs.
8. Urdhva Drishti – Up to the sky.

“Direct perception, or meditation, is the science of yoga. Yoga allows the essence, the thing in itself, to disclose itself. When this happens a full revelation of material and spiritual potential occurs.” ~ Vasant Lad/Frawley - Yoga of herbs

“It is not possible to move directly from asana to meditation. This requires jumping from the body to the mind, forgetting what lies between. To make this transition, the breath and senses, which link the body and mind, must be brought under control and developed properly. This is where pranayama and pratyahara come in. With pranayama we control our vital energies and impulses and with pratyahara we gain mastery over the unruly senses --- both prerequisites to successful meditation.” – David Frawley

Mind functions (antahkarana)

“The outer levels of mind include the senses and emotions. The senses are nourished by the tanmatras that they encounter. These tanmatras impart particular qualities that effect us accordingly. Our emotions are effected by the emotions of the others that we are surrounded by. Through proper filtering and discretion we can avoid taking on negative emotions and see the universal love present in all things that we can take in.

The inner levels of mind involve the ego (ahamkara) and the intelligence (bhuddi). The ego is nourished by beliefs about the self. These can come from one's self or others and must also be filtered with discretion. Positive

affirmation can help in the positive formation of ego. This is especially true when we can recognize a deep lying, negative self-belief which can then be countered and remediated. Intelligence similarly takes on beliefs about the outside world. It is important for all levels of mind to accept our true infinite nature and the infinite nature of reality. This allows our intelligence to work towards liberation and bliss. It also allows us to pursue our highest Dharma and a life of purpose.” ~ Basti



Mindfulness meditation - Labelling Thoughts
- All of our thoughts fall under 9 categories

- Remembering - neutral past
- Reminiscing - positive past
- Regretting - negative past

- Wondering - neutral (curious) present
- Desiring - positive present
- Judging - negative present

- Planning -neutral future
- Fantasizing – positive future
- Fearing – negative future

The 5 Kleshas

The 5 Kleshas are obstacles to our liberation that are enacted by the mind. The Kleshas are ignorance, egoism, grasping, aversion and attachment.

Through tapas and viveka we are aligned with the truth of unity. This focus eventually brings us beyond the ego, ignorance and grasping, aversion and attachment. This is mostly done through lighter experiences of samadhi in which we experience the joy of sat-chit-ananda and replace our kleshas or even any thoughts of self or not self with the absolute that is beyond any dualistic thought forms. This allows us to drop the seeds of our everyday awareness and replace them with the seeds of absolute consciousness.

Benefits of meditation

“Many say meditation can cure all disease. Through meditation, we can bring the nervous system into parasympathetic function and allow our immune system and endocrine system to work efficiently. We can find peace and relaxation this way, lowering blood pressure and slowing down the breath. Through meditation we can unplug from the extremely rajasic modern society that we live in and have sattvic experience. We are able to bring in levels of awareness to our most physical and to our most subtle bodies this way, and are given a path to experience the infinite radiance of reality and our true nature. Meditation upon various healing metaphors of jyotish can bring healing such as a windmill or a white crow for Saturn, the Muladhara. Meditation upon the breath can bring great inner awareness, meditating on a fire can be cleansing and focusing and meditating with a body of water can be very soothing. Meditating in nature is nourishment for the senses and can help to heal the nervous system after exposure to media.” ~ Basti

Meditation in Ayurveda

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Mantra

Mantra therapy is used as a way to heal the bodies with our etheric sounding and upward movement of udana vayu. Mantra can call upon celestial forces that have been revered for eons and contain a collected wealth of healing intentions from many people which come together to form a conscious shakti. Through mantra we are able to still the mind and call forth archetypal energies of healing which can help us bypass the ego's desires for a particular outcome in a particular situation and help us to work in a devotional manner with pure intentions. In yoga we are able to effect the elements, vayus, dhatus and planetary energies with mantra. It is both a form of pranayama and prayer and can be a form of affirmation. In Ayurveda it is very useful to offer appropriate mantras to those seeking healing to expedite their process towards balance and liberation. These mantras can be useful if they are repeated or even if they are just listened to.

Ram is a very important fire mantra and can help to purify the inner fires but can also raise the fire too much in some cases of high heat. Om mangalaya namaha is good for mars and om suryaya namaha is good for the sun which both hold the celestial fire. There are many soothing mantras to the goddess such as shrim, hrim and krim which are very good. Om is calming and brings us back to source or goddess.

All mantras when done appropriately help to calm the mind. Mantras for the higher centers such as mercury (om bhuddaya namaha), for the sun (Ksham or om suryaya namaha) and mantras for the moon (som or om chandraya namaha) can all help with this. The bija mantras, sham, aim and om, are particularly good for this as well.

Mantras can help with healing in many ways physically and psychically. The pranayama and tissue oxidation of vocal mantra can greatly assist with cleansing, tonification and rejuvenation. The etheric vibration of the sound itself has a positive effect on all of the tissues and all of the sheaths reaching to the most subtle in the manomaya kosha.

Through mantra we can achieve the celestial equation that is expounded by Jonathen Goldmen in the, Tantra of Sound, which is "sound + intention = healing". Even mantra said internally without a sound can be greatly healing as it puts us into a deep state of meditation and relaxation, thus activating the

parasympathetic nervous system and our immune system. Mantra always builds tejas, used with devotion can build ojas, and with pranayama will build prana. ~ Sebastian Hansen

“Superconscious chanting is that process by which internal vibrations of chant are converted into realization. This is achieved by focusing inwardly on the sound om while chanting externally. Generally speaking, a mind that cannot sustain a mantra cannot sustain meditation.” – Frawley

“Man's word is Spirit in man. Words are sounds occasioned by the vibrations of thoughts. Thoughts are vibrations sent forth by the Ego or Soul. Every word that leaves your mouth ought to be potent with your genuine soul vibration. Words in most people are lifeless because they are automatically put forth into the ether, without being impregnated with soul force. Too much talking, exaggeration or falsehood used in connection with words is just like shooting bullets out of a toy gun, without the gun-powder. That is why the prayers or words of such people do not produce any desired definite change in the order of things. Every word you utter you must mean it, i.e., every word you put forth must represent not only Truth, but some of your realized soul force. Words without soul force are husks without the corn.

Words that are saturated with sincerity, conviction, faith and intuition are just like highly explosive vibration bombs, which when let out, are sure to explode the rocks of difficulties and create the change desired. Avoid speaking unpleasant words, even though they are true. Words must be intoned according to the convictions within. Sincere words or affirmations repeated understandingly, feelingly and willingly are sure to move the Omnipresent Cosmic Vibratory Force and render you aid in your difficulty. Only appeal to that Force with infinite confidence, casting out all doubt and the spirit of looking for the desired result. If you don't do this, your appealing attention is deflected and side-tracked from its objective mark. Besides you cannot sow the vibratory prayer seed in the soil of Cosmic Consciousness and then pick it out every minute to see if it has germinated into the desired result or not.” ~ Paramahansa Yogananda

Vedic Prayer to the Heart

“This is another sort of concentration. Think of the lotus of the heart, with petals downwards, and running through it, the Sushumna; take in the breath, and while throwing the breath out imagine that the lotus is turned with the

petals upwards, and inside that lotus is an effulgent light. Meditate on that.”
~ Vivekananda

“Near your breastbone there is an open flower,
Drink the honey that is all around that flower.
Waves are coming in;
There is so much magnificence near the ocean!
Listen: Sound of big seashells! Sound of bells!” ~ Kabir

Home is where the Heart is

“The majority of modern peoples, if asked to find the place within their body where the unique self resides, would say that they live about an inch above their eyebrows and about two inches into the skull. But most indigenous and historical peoples would locate the self someplace very different. They would gesture in the region of the heart. For most of our history of habitation on earth, that is where the seat of intelligence, the seat of the soul, was located. That this has changed is more an expression of who and what we are taught in western cultures than of some exact truth. For consciousness is highly mobile and is able to use a variety of locations in the body through which to process the information we receive from the world. The location that most people now identify as themselves, oriented in the brain is only one of them.” ~ Stephen Harrod Buhner

“The whole body is cradled within the electromagnetic field generated by the heart. The information embedded within that field is communicated to the eternal world through electromagnetic waves reaching out from the body. It is communicated within the body through the bloodstream, which conducts electromagnetic impulses throughout the body.

Blood possesses tremendously potent electrical conductivity. Thus the blood carries more than pulse waves it also carries electrical messages. As just one example, DNA is sensitive to electromagnetic fields. The electromagnetic fields produced by the heart are involved in the regulation of DNA, RNA, and protein synthesis-they help induce cell differentiation and morphogenesis. This is not random, of course, for the electromagnetic waves the heart produces (and the shape of its field) are much like radio waves in that the shape of the waves changes depending on what information they receive. The human body is supremely able to decode these messages, just as our radios can decode radio station signals.” ~ Stephen Harrod Buhner

Ayurveda, The Indian Medicine

“The art of being.”

“The Science of Longevity.”

It is one of the most ancient medical systems in human history. Although not recognized to be a proper science by most scholars, it is said to be the source of inspiration for what we know today as modern medicine. It is said that its knowledge has passed from Dhavantari, the God of Ayurveda, to the sages, and these, in turn, shared it with ordinary men to help humanity. The Ayurveda philosophy states that all kinds of disease begin with an imbalance in the doshas or different elements present in the body.

There are two primary sources of written knowledge known as the Sushruta and the Charaka Samhita. In this literature, a vast body of knowledge is exposed in the following areas: General Medicine, Paediatrics, Surgery, Otorhinolaryngology, Psychiatry, Rejuvenation, and Revitalizing Tonics. In the same line of Samkhya philosophy, it categorizes the different elements that constitute the body, such as:

The five classical elements:

Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, and Ether

The seven basic tissues:

Blood, plasma, muscle, fat, bone, marrow, and semen.

The eight ways of diagnosis:

Pulse, urine, stool, tongue, touch, speech, vision, appearance

The twenty Gunas or characteristics:

E.g., Hot-Cold, Dry-Moist, Dull-Sharp, Heavy-Light, Smooth-Coarse.

The Three Doshas:

Vatta – Air » Dry, cold, light, minute, mobility » Respiratory

Pitta - Fire » Hot, moist, liquid, sharp, sour » Digestion

Kappa- Water & Earth » heavy, cold, tender, soft, slow » Mind & Bones

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Ayurveda is a comprehensive, wholistic, ancient system from India which brings balance to all parts of our being on all levels. It is the oldest retained healing system in the world.

Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita are the classic texts of Ayurveda written around 1000 BC. The vedic physician Charaka, wrote a samhita concerning, herbalism and internal medicine, whereas Sushruta wrote a text with a greater focus on surgery.

The Ashtanga Hridaya was written by Vagbhatta in 500 AD. He took the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita and made them into an easier format for comprehension in his book. The Ashtanga Hridaya is a main source of Tibetan Medicine and one of the main texts referenced by David Frawley and the Institute of Vedic Studies.

In Samkhya philosophy, Prakriti creates distinction after purusha. Purusha is homogenous and does not provide diagnostic info. Prakriti holds the doshas and gunas, satva, rajas and tamas, which are the foundation of ayurvedic thought. Prakriti is ones nature or personal balance of the elements. There is also Vikriti or the false nature. This usually needs to be cleansed and cleared before the Prakriti can fully reveal itself.

Ether, air, fire water and earth, the elements are important because they relate so many things together. The elements are present in people, anatomy, planets, herbs, foods, yogic poses, alchemical formulas, the chakras, and forms of energy. The elements make connections between the different limbs of yoga as an etheric alphabet of interconnectivity.

The 3 Doshas are vata, pitta and kapha. They are primordial forces made up of particular element pairs and characteristics. They help to describe energies in people and prescribe balancing treatment. Vata is wind contained in ether. Pitta is fire contained in water in the body. Kapha is water contained in earth. By treating the doshas, we treat people appropriate to their condition.

Ayurvedic integral healing encompasses everything in the human experience. Every sense and emotion is greatly detailed in its effects on different body types. Utilizing balancing qualities in food, medicine and experience for the dosha of a person allows us to increase or decrease the effected gunas and encourage healing.

Ayurveda holds that all things happen for a reason and we are responsible for having cultivated our own karma. Principles of cause and effect allow us to see what can be done to change a persons condition. It shows us that in a higher sense a persons mind manas is an "effect" which can be elevated to Bhuddi by changing "causes" or expectations. With no attachments, one can always be peaceful.

One's health is a product of their karma. One can improve their health and karma at the same time through yogic medicine. Pancha karma refers to the 5 cleanses of vedic detox where karmas are removed. Understanding that one is effecting their own karma and health at the same time can help people choose healthy choices and be self empowered.

Yogic medicine is a spiritual medicine requiring responsibility on the side of the patient. Inner works, meditation, are the main focus. Yogic medicine cures the subtle imbalances in the life force through treating the mind. It is greatly focused on liberation.

Ayurveda is deeply wholistic in its mind-body-spirit approach and its alignment with yogic methods. Allopathic medicine is quantitative in its assessment using scientific diagnostics. Allopathic medicine is only a few hundred years old. It is deeply reductionistic, with a separation between their physical and mental treatment and no spiritual grounding. The two primary allopathic methods of healing are pharmaceutical drugs and surgery, both of which are very dangerous. Ayurvedic treatment is usually extremely safe.

Ayurveda is similar to Chinese medicine in ways. Yin and yang and chi are similar to the trinity of kapha, pitta and vata. They both use a wide range of modalities like meditation, body movement, herbs, bodywork, alchemy and astrology. TCM doesn't have as extensive of a cosmology showing our consciousness arising out of reality. TCM has a more extensive mapping of vital points on the body when compared to ayurvedic marma therapy. Chinese medicine utilizes acupuncture and uses animal parts and unprepared minerals, which ayurveda does not use. Ayurveda has a wide range of purification techniques to cleanse "Ama", or toxicity, as seen in pancha karma. TCM however, focuses more on tonification and only uses acupuncture for cleansing. The institutionalized modern form of TCM has undergone a shift away from spiritual focus, much as the institutionalized modern Ayurveda has taken on many allopathic qualities and has a less spiritual focus.

Biospiritual medicine is a devotional practice that uses various medicinal parts of nature and incorporates yogic practice of breath, mantra and focus. Biospiritual medicine believes in the effect of intention and the spiritual presence of humans and plants and nature. Through biospiritual medicine we are able to arrive at an experience of union, yoga, by which we understand the infinite nature of the self, resulting in psychological health. Without an infinite understanding of the self, Ayurveda states that one will become unhealthy. Truly our physical structure is guided by the state of our consciousness and the quality of our thoughts. This is the true control mechanism which the

physicality is subservient to. As the louis pasteur realized on his death bed, the environment is truly what controls reality rather than microbes and such.

Through our spiritual beliefs, we create the environment which controls our health. Through devotional practice and surrender, we are further able to relax and enliven our psyche, helping us to access our parasympathetic nervous system and deep healing. Through biospiritual medicine we are also able to access past lives and more subtle states of being. Astrological reading can assist in understanding what spiritual medicine is appropriate with its chart analysis. This creates an opportunity for astrological diagnosis and prescription for specialized, gem and metal therapies, appropriate planetary herbs, colors, mantras, meditations and balanced timing for planned events.

Palliation

Palliation is a gentle process of balancing the doshas which can lead on to stronger purifacation methods. Palliation therapies involve oleation and steam therapies with a diet which is satvic, digestive and nutritive with proper food combining and appropriate emphasis on the persons particular doshic balance and digestive fire. Plenty of rest and a lack of stress in the life is indicated. This can be enhanced by sattvic places in nature and by sattvic music, people or colors.

Purification methods are used to clear ama from the system. Excess Kapha is cleared from the stomach as phlegm, excess pitta is cleared from the small intestine as bile. Excess vata, however is cleared from the large intestine as gas and dryness and requires oleation, emoleation and carminative foods and herbs rather than needing purifacation methods which can be drying.

Purifaction is done through fasting or restricting diet, breath work, and using kriyas and asanas to help circulation in the internal organs. With preemptive steam and oleation methods to bring the toxins from the dhatus into the digestive tract, there are various cleansing methods such as virechana, vamana and nirooha basti which can then clear the ama from those channels that the toxins were brought into.

3 Doshas or bodily humours

COMPLEXION, PERSONALITY, AND COMMON ACTIVITIES

Vatta: Very tall or very short, lightweight, dry skin and pale complexion, erratic appetite, excretory constipation, poor circulation, tendency to be cold, fast speech and ever-changing ideas, they can notice things very quickly, but they

tend to forget them, their mental nature is constantly changing and adapting to the environment. Tendency to experience anxiety or to be unmotivated, unsettledness. They make good thinkers, communicators, creative and artistic skills, and are resourceful.

Pitta: Medium-sized, muscular. Skin is oily and tends to rush, light hair color, white or red skin: strong appetite, and fast digestion. Burning and acidic feces in large volumes, powerful hot blood circulation, aggressive and goal-orientated speech, excellent memory, hardworking, prominent personality. Imposes its will upon reality and others. Tends to experience rage and is motivated by results. Moved by fame and pride. Logical and rational mind. Tend to lose objectivity when trying to prove themselves to be right. They make good leaders, politicians, law enforcers, public figures, teachers, sports people, and judges.

Kapha: Gross, heavyweight, round face, friendly, reliable, smooth skin, hairy body, medium appetite, stable metabolism, medium volume of feces and urine, mucositis. Consistent circulation, cold hands, and feet. They don't talk much and tend to have nice and soft voices. They take their time to act and notice things around them, but they commit and remember circumstances once they do. They can quickly become depressed or lazy when not comfortable. Slow mental activity, patient, constant. Holds things, groups, and activities together. They make good social workers, psychologists, mathematicians, planning & organization, doctors, and coaches.

How to increase the Doshas: Lifestyle, Exercise, and Diet

Vatta: Do something different, change plans, usual ways of doing things, arrange new activities, travel to distant places. Running and moving around, engage in a fast-moving and thinking practice, vinyasa practice, fasting, eating raw, different kinds of fresh salads, and juicing.

Pitta: Set a goal-orientated routine, set an alarm, checklist, and priority list of objectives, find motivation and the reason for doing everything, power yoga, eating fiery foods such as chilies, curries, ginger, garlic, and onions.

Kappa: Having a routine, settling in one place, building long-lasting relations, getting a stable job over a certain period, commitment, taking responsibility, buying a house, getting a dog, doing gardening and activities in nature, meditation practices, eating earthy foods such as potatoes, bread, peanuts, grains.

VATA

The harmonious union of air and space. Just like air and space, vata is light and mobile.



PITTA

The harmonious union of fire and water. Like fire, pitta is hot, sharp, and light. Like water, it is oily and spreading.

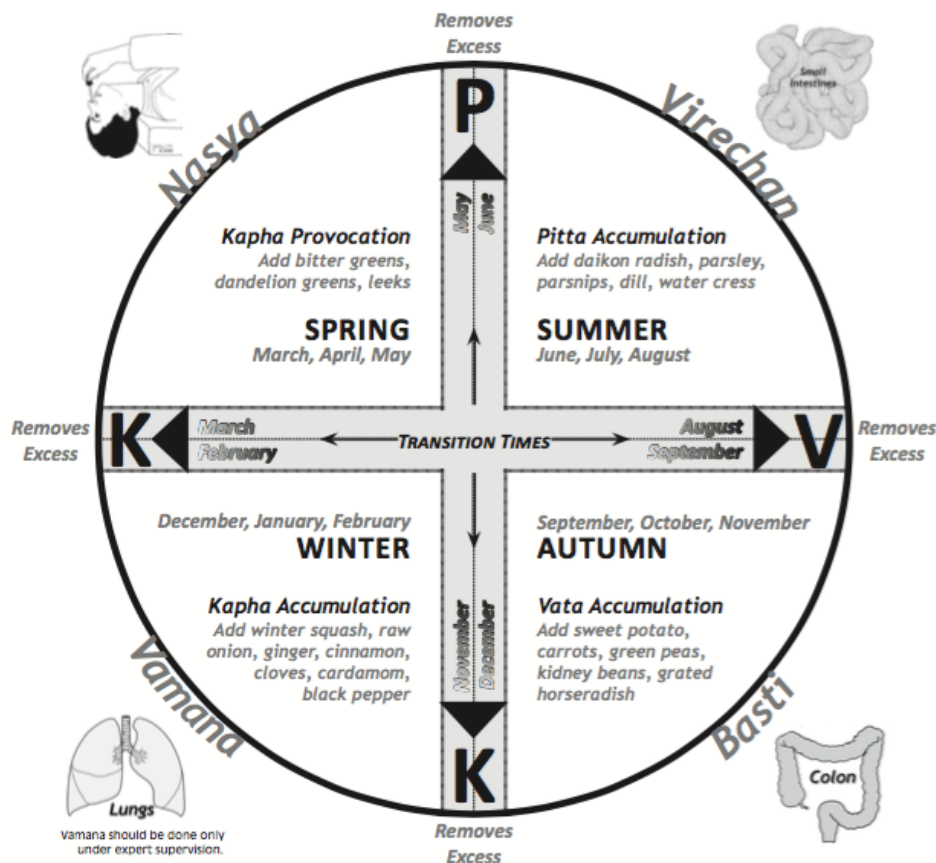


KAPHA

The harmonious union of water and earth. Like water, kapha is soft and cold. Like Earth, it is heavy and stable.



Cleansing with the Seasons in Ayurveda



Nasya is the nasal application of medicinal liquids or powders. Virechana is purgation therapy (moving the bowels). Vamana is emetic therapy (vomiting). Basti is the anal application of medicinal liquids. All of these procedures are part of Pancha Karma therapy. Dosha emphasis for time of day

The doshas each have a time of day in which they are increased.

- 6 am - 10 am - kapha
- 10 am - 2 pm - pitta
- 2 pm - 6 pm - vata
- 6 pm - 10 pm - kapha
- 10 pm - 2 am – pitta
- 2 am - 6 am – vata

Kapha is more likely to be aggravated in the morning or evening. Pitta is more likely at noon or midnight and vata is more likely during sunrise or sunset.

Gunas effects Doshas

Because the three describe the mental and spiritual nature coming from a combination of elements like the Doshas, a person of any Dosha can be of any Guna. The guna displays the quality of the dosha. We are able to effect our dosha by having awareness of our guna and striving towards sattva.

Sattva is balanced and contains ether. Rajas is frantic and sharp and tamas is dull and slow, so sattva is the best of the trinity in a spiritual sense. Although rajas and tamas are sometimes used in healing to balance each other out.

The 3 singular Doshas, Vata, Pitta and Kapha, combine in pairs to create the dual types, Vata-Pitta, Vata-Kapha, and Pitta-Kapha. The seventh combination has all three doshas in a balance and can be called a VPK type.

Vata-kapha can be tamasically slow, apathetic, inconsistent and overly sensitive. They are very yin as water with air can be. Their sattvic side is more nurturing adaptable and creative. It is important to check in with their motives and encourage self empowerment and reliance in their healing process.

Pitta-kapha can be tamasically uncompromising and controlling. They can be sattvically balanced, calm and powerful.

Vata-Pitta can be tamasically unstable and anxious, quick to change and easily upset. They are very fiery as vata's wind can add to the fire of Pitta. They can be sattvic in their intelligence and with proper care (Kapha) can enact deep positive change.

When we eat our food enters our mouths and is swallowed to our stomach. In this first kapha phase it encounters saliva and stomach acid which are kapha liquids. In the second pitta stage the food meets the fiery acid of the pancreas, liver and small intestine. In the third vata phase the food releases gases in the large intestine.

- Vata – Air in ether - Accumulates as wind in the colon
“That which moves things.”
Vata is dry, light , cold, rough, subtle, mobile and agitated.
- Pitta – Fire in water - Gathers as bile in the small intestine
“That which digests things.”
Pitta is oily, sharp/penetrating, hot, light, smelly, mobile and liquid.
- Kapha – Water in earth - Accumulates as phlegm in the stomach and lungs
“That which holds things together.” Kapha is wet, cold, heavy, slow, sticky, soft and fixed.

6 Tastes – “RASA”

- Sweet - "madhur"
 - - water and earth – “jala and prithvi”
- Sour - "amla"
 - - fire and earth – “agni and prithvi”
- Salty - "lavana"
 - - fire and water – “agni and jala”
- Spicy - "katu"
 - - fire and air – “agni and vayu”
- Astringent - "kashaya"
 - - air and earth – “vayu and prithvi”
- Bitter - 'tikta"
 - - ether and air – “akash and vayu”

Sweet adds to kapha and lowers vata and pitta.

Sour mildly increases kapha, decreases vata and greatly adds to pitta.

Salty increases kapha and pitta and is very decreasing to vata.

Pungent taste adds greatly to pitta, mildly adds to vata and greatly diminishes kapha.

Bitter taste adds greatly to vata, is the most decreasing taste for pitta and also reduces kapha.

Astringent greatly reduces pitta, increases vata and decreases kapha.

Each flavor has a general “virya”, or power of heating or cooling.

- The “virya” of the pungent, sour and salty flavors are heating.
- The “virya” of the bitter, astringent and sweet tastes are cooling.
- The vipaka is known as the post digestive effect. This is not the aftertaste in the mouth but rather the energetic of the taste which stays in the digestion afterwards. The sweet and salty tastes both have a sweet vipaka. The sour taste has sour vipaka. The pungent, bitter and astringent tastes have a bitter vipaka.
- It is said, "If there is a good diet there is no reason for medicine, and if there is a bad diet there is also no reason for medicine." Diet is the underlying root of health and without a healing diet the herbal therapies will not have a sure platform to be effective. Diet is a major part of palliation therapies, which are necessary before deeper cleanses can be performed or rejuvenation therapy is appropriate.

The twenty-four principles or tattvas of Samkhya are said (in the *Mahabharata*, in which the *Bhagavad Gita* occurs and in Ayurvedic texts) to be composed of the Ashta-Prakriti (eightfold Prakriti) and Shodasha Purusha (sixteenfold Purusha) of the *Gita* and *Upanishads*.

The Eightfold Prakriti consists of 1) Prakriti itself (Nature), 2) Mahat (cosmic intelligence), 3) Ahamkara (cosmic ego) and the five cosmic elements of 4) ether, 5) air, 6) fire, 7) water and 8) earth. These form the basic substance or Prakriti of all things and form *the causal body of the soul*.

The Sixteenfold Purusha (Soul) consists of the five sense organs, the five motor organs and the five tanmatras or subtle elements and mind. These are the main factors of the subtle or astral body. They are products of the Eightfold Prakriti, resulting from the action of the cosmic elements upon Ahamkara or cosmic ego in its sattvic, rajasic and tamasic modes.

Together these twenty-four factors form the Linga or the subtle/causal body complex, which is the vehicle of the soul or the embodied Purusha. The Linga stays with the soul throughout the entire process of rebirth.

To these twenty-four principles, Samkhya adds the Supreme Purusha or pure consciousness as the twenty-fifth. This is the standard or basic system of Samkhya or cosmic enumeration.

The Yoga system of Patanjali adds Ishvara, or God as the Cosmic Lord, as a separate principle or special Purusha to the 25 of Samkhya, providing it a more specific theistic orientation. Classical Samkhya generally places Ishvara under Mahat Tattva or the principle of cosmic intelligence or under the Purusha itself.

Of the Vedantic systems, *Advaita* or Non-dualist Vedanta has an expanded set of the tattvas, recognizing the *Jivatman* (Individual soul), *Ishvara* (God or the Creator), *Paramatman* (Supreme Self) and *Brahman* (Godhead, Absolute or Pure Being) as additional principles (though ultimately one). It speaks of the 'eightfold city' (puryashtakam), which is its formulation of the subtle/causal body complex.

The 3 Gunas

Sattva - Etheric bliss balanced

Rajas - Fiery action imbalanced

Tamas – Toxic inertia and dullness

The 3 gunas are described as having five primary mental qualities by Yogi Gorakhnath.

Sattva consists of charity, dharma, compassion, devotion and faith.

Rajas consists of gifts, enjoyment, sexuality, greed and attachment.

Tamas consists of conflict, sorrow, disputes, attachment and deceit.

These three gunas create three basic powers in the universe or the three great powers or Shaktis of nature.

- Sattva is the power of knowledge (Jnana Shakti).
- Rajas is the power of action (Kriya Shakti).
- Tamas is the power of materialization (Dravya Shakti).

Relative to the mind

- From Sattva comes the power of knowledge (Vidya shakti), which brings about clarity, insight and knowledge of reality.
- From Tamas comes the power of ignorance and obstruction (avarana shakti). This veils the nature of the Purusha or inner Self and creates darkness, lack of awareness and failure of perception.
- From Rajas comes the power of false imagination (vikshepa shakti). This projects some wrong idea or perception of things.

Generally Rajas works out of Tamas and results in it over time.

Yet the gunas each have their place in nature. Rajas creates energy and prana. Tamas creates form and the body. They are only negative forces when they intrude into the mind as the sphere of Sattva. Sattva itself is also the proper balance of Rajas and Tamas.

Sattva is the power of knowledge Jnana Shakti.

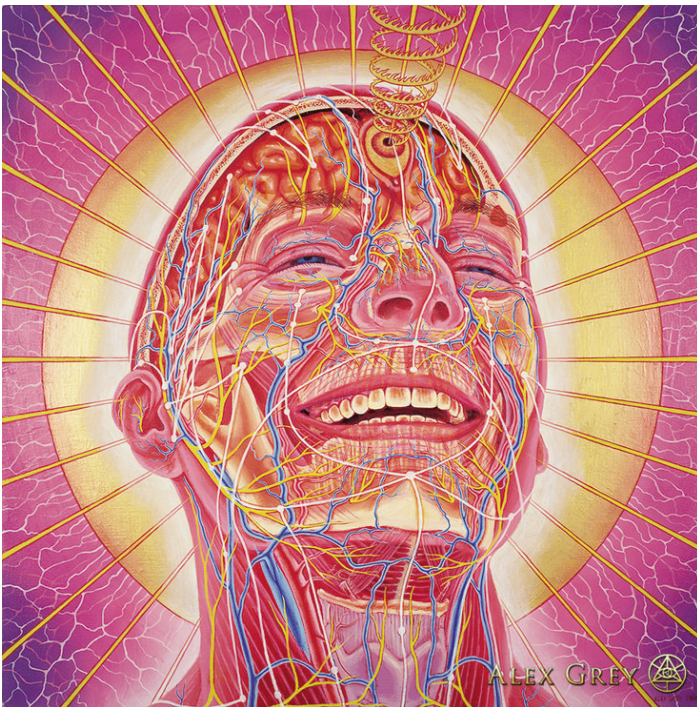
Pure Sattva is developed through the one-pointed mind and heart. When the mind becomes one-pointed or fully concentrated then its Sattva becomes stabilized and will no more revert to Rajas and Tamas. When the mind has

become totally one-pointed then the mind itself becomes clear like a mirror and only serves to reflect the Purusha. ~ David Frawley

Sattva is the natural tendency of the mind to peace, clarity and harmony

“Remain calm..... the divine will take care of the rest.” - Yogini Kaliji

“The person who always speaks truth, never becomes angry, concentrates his mind on spiritual activities, is very calm and quiet and pursues the path to find out self realization, is considered as taking rasayana (rejuvenative medicine) all the time. Such a person achieves longevity and enjoys his life.”~ Subhash Ranade describing Nitya Rasayana



Rajas is the power of action (Kriya Shakti).

Rajas is the natural tendency of the Prana to action and dispersal of energy into the external world. Rajas creates energy and prana. Rajas is energy without stability.

Tamas is the power of materialization Dravya Shakti

Tamas is the entropy or inertia of physical matter to return to its natural condition. Tamas creates form and the body. Tamas is stability without energy. Tamas can create decay and entropy. Tamas can veil the nature of the Purusha or inner Self and creates darkness, lack of awareness and failure of perception.

Our five motor organs relate to the elements. These are the mouth (ether), hands (air), feet (fire), urino-genital (water) and excretory organs (earth).

Five sense organs of the ears (ether), skin (air), eyes (fire), tongue (water) and nose (earth).

Five pranas of Prana (inward), Apana (downward), Udana (upward), Samana (spiraling/digesting) and Vyana (outward).

Five elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth.

Four aspects of mind or internal instrument (antahkarana) as chitta (mental field), buddhi (intelligence), manas (sensory mind) and ahamkara or ego.

Ignorance, desire and karma are the driving forces behind the tattvas of the subtle body. They are the main factors behind the workings of Prakriti.

Ayurveda adds its set of physical tattvas to those of Samkhya for understanding health issues. These include the three doshas, the fifteen subdoshas, the seven dhatus (tissues), fourteen channel-systems (srotas) and the thirteen Agnis. These expand and complete the tattvas relative to the physical body.

The Energetic Body - Chakras

Chakras

The Chakras are the main energetic centers. For some scientists, the psychic centers or chakras are areas of immense radiation caused by localized accumulations of pranic energy emitting various sub-atomic particles. These psychic centers gather different energies, usually emitted by the brain.

Figure 13

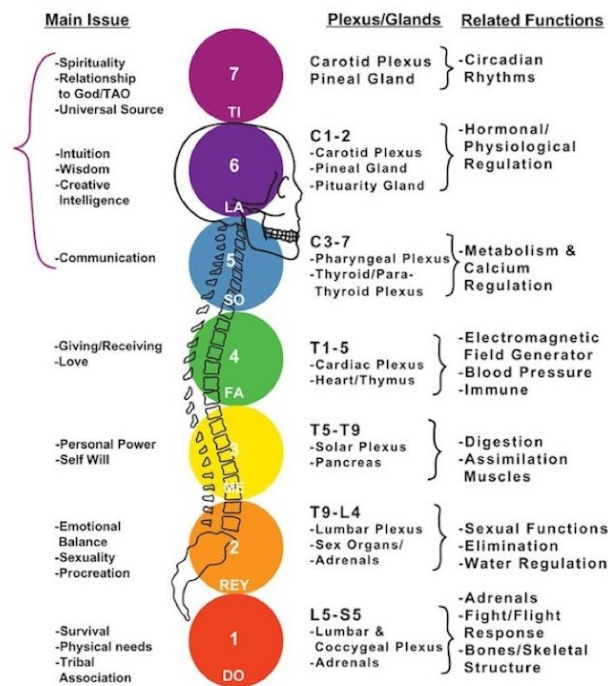
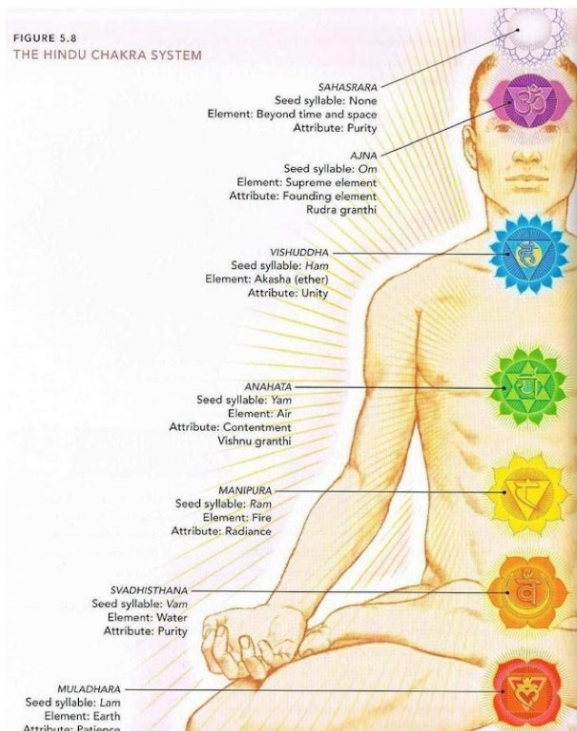


FIGURE 5.8
THE HINDU CHAKRA SYSTEM



“The seven chakras consecutively climb the spine. Muladhara, the root chakra, is located at the root of the spine. Svadisthana, the sacral chakra, is located above the root at the sex organs. Manipura, the navel chakra, is located above the belly button. Anahata, the heart chakra, is located at the heart. Vishuddha, the throat chakra, is located at the throat. Ajna, the third eye, is located at the brow. Sahasra, the crown chakra, is at the top of the head.

The root chakra is earth and relates to smell and the elimination of the anus. The sacral chakra is water and relates to taste and reproductive organs. The navel chakra is fire and relates to sight and the mobility of the feet. The heart chakra is air and relates to touch and the grasping of the hands. The throat chakra is ether and relates to hearing and expression. The third eye is mental ether (or upper octave fire) and relates to minds receptivity and action. The crown chakra is purusha and it is the source and guide of all energies.

The root chakra connects to the adrenals. The sacral chakra relates to the testes and uterus. The navel chakra works with the pancreas. The heart chakra relates to the thymus. The throat chakra is connected to the thyroid. The third eye contains the pituitary gland and the crown chakra connects with the pineal gland.” - Sebastiaan

Mooladhara- The Root Center

- Birth Situation, Mother's emotional body, the first year of growth, home environment, and how we walk on this planet.
- Represented by legs, bones, teeth, ankles, nails, and blood.
- Connection to Earth.
- Color Red.
- Seed Mantra LAM.
- Duality Safety/Danger
- Suprarenal Gland



Muladhara

Balanced: being present, feeling safe.

Excessive: Slow, possessive, territorial, false ego, obesity.

Deficient: Not taking responsibility, not feeling well within, lack of trust.

Traumas: Scarcity, abandonment, abuse, unwanted birth.

Therapies: Despacho, offerings to Mother Nature, mountain hiking.

Questions

How is my relationship with mother earth? Do I feel able to provide for and protect others? Do I feel safe and present within my body?

Any early memories of childhood regarding scarcity?

Swadisthana- The Sensation Center

- Creativity, Spontaneity, Pleasures, Moon Cycle.
- Understanding different ways of dealing with emotions.
- Represented by the lower abdomen, inner organs,
- Connection with Water.
- Color Orange.
- Seed Mantra BAM.
- Duality Guilt / Pleasure



Swadhisthana

Balanced: Healthy Boundaries, ability to embrace change.

Excessive: Addiction, overindulgence (sex, drugs, food), mood swings, victim mentality, emotional dependency.

Deficiency: Rigidity, control, repression, not needing others, fear of change, sexual imbalance.

Traumas: Emotional suppression, pleasure denial, lack of empathy.

Therapies: writing, constellations, taking vacations, fasting.

Questions

Do I create the space in my life to enjoy?

Do I experience anxiety about controlling the situations? How do I deal with my emotions? Were you able to express your emotions as a child?

Manipura- Center of Self Reflection

- The way we represent ourselves to others. Reflect on how we digest changes, challenges, and threats to our identity. False Ego- the Boss: is saying how things need to be done.
- Being competitive, noticeable.
- Represented by Solar Plexus
- Element Fire.
- Color Yellow. Seed Mantra RAM.
- Duality Shame/Pride



Balanced: responsible, reliable, leadership, self-discipline, proactiveness.

Excessive: unrestfulness, bad temper, tantrums, and neediness.

Deficient: Cold, blaming others, weak discipline, low self-esteem.

Traumas: Being repressed by authority, not having any boundaries.

Therapies: Role-playing games, theater, karma yoga, and offering service.

Questions

Do I make myself noticed? Do I grasp for control?

How do I represent myself in this world? Were my role models authoritative?

Do I have problems dealing with Authority?

Anahata- Center of Close Relations

- It reflects on how we perceive the ones around us.
- Center of flow, letting go of conditioning, control, and victimization.
- Making space within to observe, receive and express.
- Represent Lungs, Chest, and Heart.
- Element Air. Color Green /Pink.
- Seed Mantra YAM.
- Duality: Grieve /Forgiveness.



Anahata

Balanced: we love ourselves and care for others.

Excessive: Living through others, co-dependency, jealousy.

Deficient: Isolation, not sharing feelings, fear of touch.

Traumas: abandonment, shame, judgment, rejection, infidelity.

Therapies: Adopting a pet, journaling, kirtan, silent meditation

Questions

Is there conditioning in the way I love? Am I able to forgive? What are the challenges? How is my relation to touch and intimacy? Do I tend to isolate myself regarding my feelings?

Visshuda- Center of Communication

- Expressing our identity, dharma.
- Making good decisions, discerning the way we express ourselves.
- Represents the throat, neck, tonsils, and jaw.
- Color Blue, Element Ether, Seed Mantra Ham
- Duality: Truth / Dishonesty



Vishuddha

Balance: Ability to share, teach, give advice, and listen. Integrity.

Excessive: Too much talking, loud, inability to listen, gossip. Interruptive.

Deficient: Shy, small voice, poor expression, deafness, and stuttering.

Traumas: Lies, constant yelling, verbal abuse, secrets, being ignored.

Therapies: arts, music, affirmations, sharing circles.

Questions

Do I express my truth? Do I engage myself in secrets and gossip? Am I clear enough when expressing my boundaries? Am I able to speak up in public? How is my decision making?

Ajna –Center of Visualization

- Developing our spiritual perception.
- Self-realization. Being able to see the divine everywhere.
- To let die our mundane and ego-based vision. Remove the illusion.
- Related to brain, nervous system, eyes, and ears.
- Color Purple. Element Ether. Seed Mantra AUM.
- Duality: Illusion / Clarity



Ajna

Balanced: Intuitive, imaginative, memory, clairvoyance.

Excessive: Hallucinations, headache, nightmares, paranoia, and day-dream.

Deficient: Short and long sight, poor memory, not seeing the future.

Traumas: Lies, discretisation for what you have seen, violent impressions, judging a mental environment. Being tricked or fooled.

Therapies: Memory cards, mandala visualizations, dream journaling, hypnosis.

Questions:

How do I see/feel the world around me? How is the sacredness expressed in my life? How is your relation to dreaming experiences? Do you trust your intuition? Are you able to see and follow the signs?

Sahasrara- Center of Transcendence

- Understanding and letting go of Inner light and perception of oneness. Realization about life, surrender to death.
- Represents the crown of the head.
- Element Space-Time undefined
- Color: Light Purple (Indigo) Seed Mantra: Silence
- Duality: Attachment vs detachment



Sahasrara

Balanced: Humble and knowledgeable, dedicated and surrendered.

Excessive: Overly Intellectual, thinks to know it all, and is out of touch with the body.

Deficient: Rigid belief systems, religious dogma, materialism, skepticism.

Traumas: Lack of information and guidance, poor education.

Therapies: Re-establish spiritual connection, nature & curiosity.

Questions

What is my relationship with the notion of death? In what way is it hard for me to let go of everything? Do I fully embrace impermanence in daily life? Do I allow myself to see beyond my limitations?

Anatomy

It isn't necessary to memorize hundreds of muscles and bones to experience the benefits of applying science to Yoga. It's better to have a functional understanding of a few critical anatomical structures and how they relate to optimize the practice, break through blockages and avoid injury.

The Spine

The spine is composed of four sections.

The Cervical has seven vertebrae.

The Thoracic has twelve vertebrae.

The Lumbar has five vertebrae. (24 vertebrae).

Additionally, The Sacrum has five fused vertebrae.

And the Coccyx four vertebrae, remnants of a tail. Each of these sections are divided by its natural curves. Between the vertebrae, some discs allow the movement of the spine in 4 ways:

Flexion

Extension

Axial Rotation (Twist)

Lateral Flexion (Side Bending)

Movement Exploration

When you increase the thoracic curve by dropping your chest forward, the neck and the lower back flatten and lead you to exhalation. When you lift your chest, the curves in both are activated and tend to lead you into inhalation.

There is a fifth extension of the spine when you apply the principles of alignment in Tadasana that eliminates all the significant curves in the body.

There is a notion of intrinsic equilibrium where the spine proves itself to be a self-supporting structure, making spinal movements produce the potential energy that brings it back to neutral. The rib cage, pelvis, and Spine are bound together by mechanical tension. This balance does not come from muscular structures but from the relationship between cartilage, ligament, and bone.

The Skeletal System

The bones are part of the circulatory and immune system because red and white blood cells are created in the bone marrow, and they are part of the nervous system because of the role of calcium in the working of neurons. They are part of the endocrine system because the hormones released by the bones and cells play a role in our metabolism.

Musculoskeletal System

Bones, ligaments, and tendons all weave together into a dynamic whole. The muscular portion is composed of muscles and tendons that cross the joint space and attach to the bone. It also includes the nerve endings that coordinate them to create movement.

Muscles and bones negotiate our relationship with gravity and space. Without the structure and support of the skeletal system would be a puddle of contractile tissue. The job of the bones is to receive weight and transmit force. The ligaments and connective tissue make possible the movement of the bones. Dissecting movement within the body

The vertical plane divides the body into front and back.

The horizontal plane divides the body into top and bottom.

The sagittal plane divides the body into right and left

Flexion- two body parts are getting closer.

Extension- two body parts are getting further away.

Adduction- moving closer to the midline.

Abduction- moving away from the center line.

Medial rotation- rotating movement toward the midline, internal rotation, hips, and shoulders.

Lateral rotation- rotating movement away from the midline, outer rotation.

Pronation- rotation to the front, lying on the belly.

Supination- rotation to the back, lying on your back

Muscles

Muscles are made up of muscle tissue, connective tissue, nerves, and blood vessels. The muscle tissue contract and creates movement. The connective tissue communicates the contraction, the nerves tell the muscle when to act, and the blood vessels provide the nourishment that allows the muscle to be active. Muscles do not contract in an all-or-nothing fashion. They regulate themselves by the nervous system dealing with gravity and resistance from the outside.

Agonist and Antagonist Pairs

The muscles that create the joint action are called the agonist, and the muscles that make the opposite joint action are called the antagonist. When one muscle of the pair acts, the other responds and modulates. This relationship is called reciprocal innervation.

In Plank to Chaturanga, we can see:

Concentric contraction,
Eccentric contraction,
Isometric contraction,

Muscles move in groups

Moving the tip of the fingers involve your arms, neck, and jaw in a long chain of dynamic action. Never in our life have we used a single muscle to do a task.

One trick when strengthening the body is the disassembling of the postures. Think of them as individual components while bringing awareness and control to those parts. From there, gradually integrate the isolated parts into complete poses (alignment principles).

***Tendon**- connects muscles to bones, organizes tight fibers, isn't meant to stretch much, and helps support heavy loads. Tendonitis is the irritation or inflammation of the tendons and can be an indication of inadequate blood supply

***Joint**- the location where bones connect allows for movement for the most part. Most common are synovial joints in which there are four (saddle, ball and socket, hinge, and gliding- photo)

***Ligaments**- connects bone to bone, provides stability, keeps from moving in backward positions, and holds the structure together.

GROUPING THE ASANAS

Seated poses

Forward rotation of the pelvis, diaphragm lifted, hamstring stretches, twists, hip openers, shoulders relaxed, potentially cooling practice, calming.

Standing poses

Rooted in feet, thigh (quad) engagement (muscular energy), freedom in the upper body (organic energy), Mula bandha.

Forward bends

IT (Iliotibial) band release, hamstring stretch, forward momentum, balance, pulling up, destress, careful of hyper-mobility, and rocking back into the heels.

Backbends

Heart opening, low back lengthening, inner and outer rotation, feet and knees and hips in line, and open shoulders, should be practiced after warming up the practice.

Twists

Careful of the SI joint; moving the pelvis and sacrum simultaneously reduces injury, making sure to keep breathing. It can be done standing or seated.

Balancing- help find your center, improve equilibrium, focus attention, gaze, spread, and root either in the hands or feet, no locking or holding breath, stability in the pelvis (glutes).

Lying poses- SI joint concentration, the release of the lower back, more restorative.

Inversions- focus on shoulder stability, which can be unnatural. Awareness starts with postures that aren't weight-bearing, then move toward weight-bearing asana.

IMPORTANT MUSCLES

Psoas- primary connector between the torso and the legs, affects posture, stabilizes the spine, hip flexor muscle, tightness can cause lordosis in the spine, instability causes overarching in the lower back.

SI joint- Sacroiliac joint, where the sacrum and ilium connect, everyone has two, women experience pain here more than men, the weight of the trunk transfers out through this joint, affects low back and gait, unique area in everyone, focus on the extended leg.

Diaphragm- inhales contract/flatten and moves it down, exhales it relaxes and moves it up, attached to the transverse abdominis (TrA), can be a focus in every pose, involved in spinal stability, tightness in the core can cause upper chest breathing which can cause neck tension and headaches.

Sacrum- the low spine, five fused vertebrae, and triangle-shaped (help find w/ hands on low back)

IT band- iliotibial band, the band of connective tissue running from the outside of the thigh to the shin/lower knee, connects glutes to the tibia and stabilizes the knee. Pain is common in most athletes.

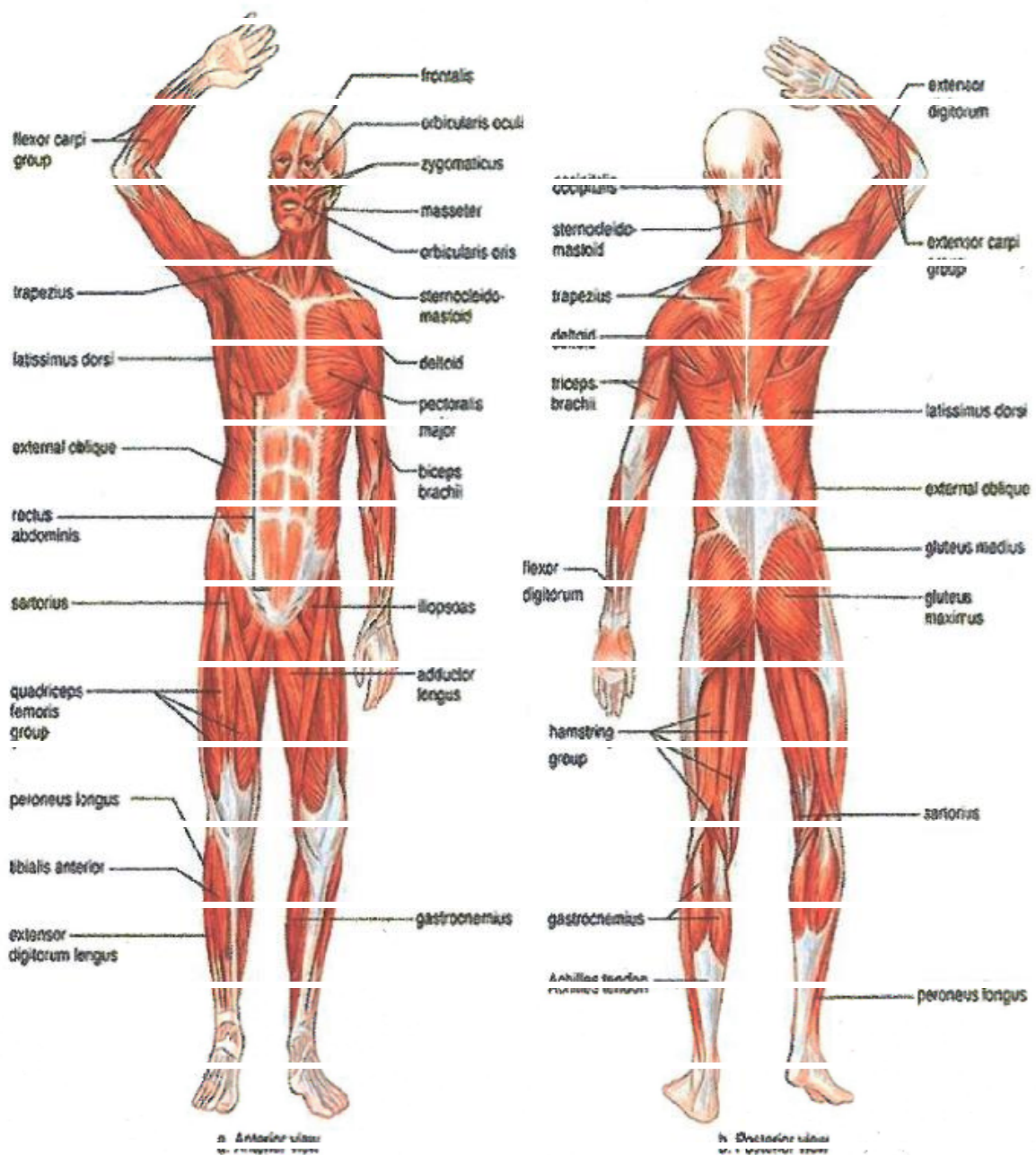
Shoulder girdle- is comprised of the humerus and clavicle and scapula, lots of mobility, arm bones are connected to the axial skeleton by this girdle, four large muscles here, and weakness in one muscle can cause overcompensation of the others, here is also a pelvic girdle.

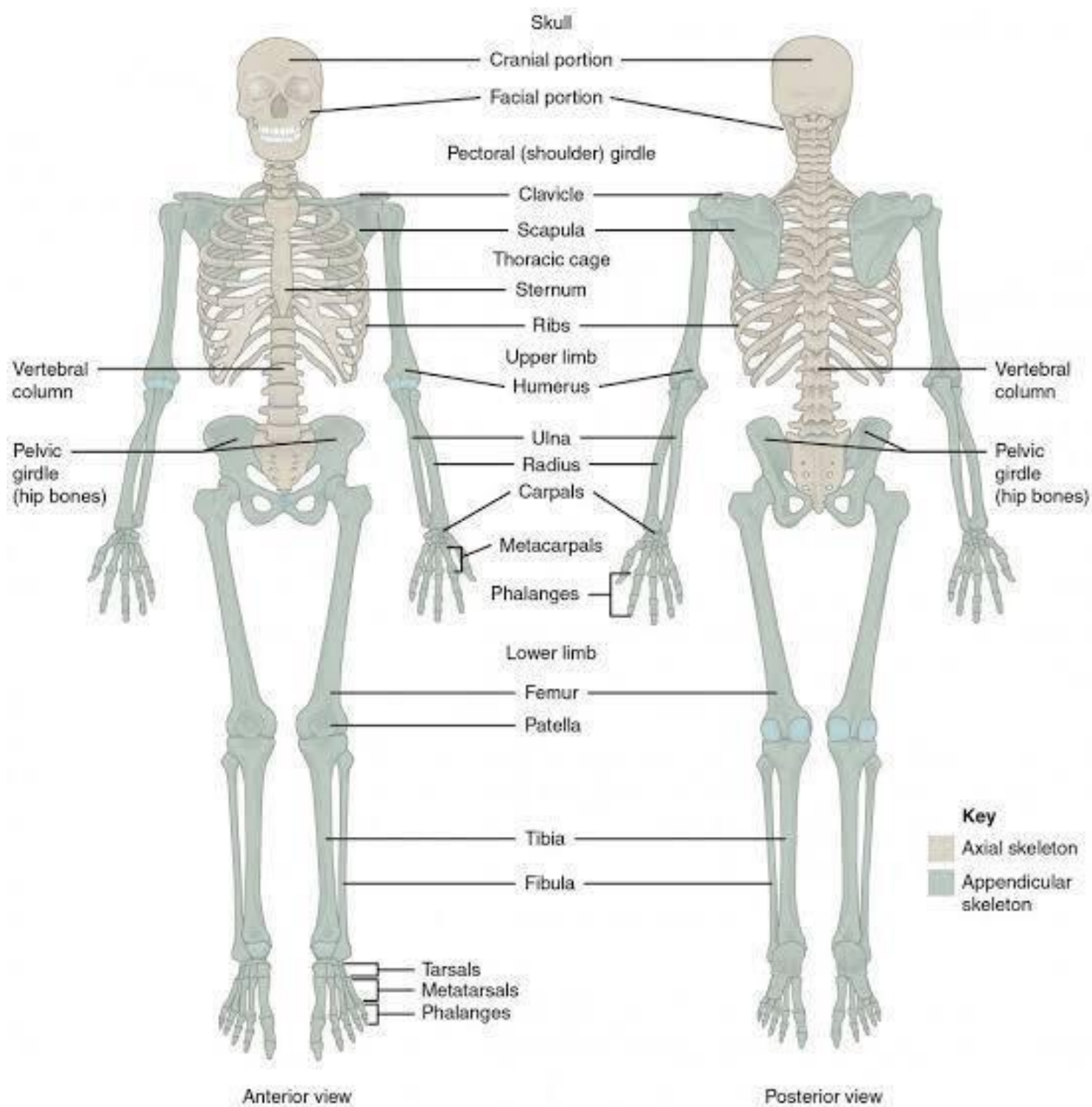
Scapula- shoulder blade, shoulder loop, humerus meets the scapula in the ball and socket joint of the shoulder, connects to the collarbone, connects to the breastbone, connects to the ribs, and connects to the spine. They are connected mainly by muscles and ligaments.

Posterior muscle chain- includes the muscles of the low back, glutes, hamstrings, and calves. Typical postures and exercises make this muscle chain weak and overstretched while over-tightening the anterior muscle chain (Anusara alignments).

Erector spinae- lies on either side of the spinal column, extends upward from the sacrum along the spine, functions to straighten the back, and allows for side-to-side rotation.

Piriformis- small muscle, deep butt muscle, connects the lower spine to femur bones, functions to rotate the hips, can be easily irritated, dull pain and butt pain and low back pain can indicate that this area is irritated.





Yoga Nidra

Title: Exploring Yoga Nidra: History, Samskaras, Sankalpa, and Brainwave Influence

Introduction:

Yoga Nidra, often translated as "yogic sleep," is a profound practice that combines deep relaxation and meditation. It is a systematic method of guided relaxation and conscious awareness, leading to a state of deep rest and heightened self-awareness. In this essay, we will delve into the history of Yoga Nidra, explore the concept of samskaras (imprints on the subconscious mind), discuss the significance of sankalpa (intention or resolve), and examine the influence of brainwaves during the practice.

History of Yoga Nidra:

Yoga Nidra has its roots in ancient yogic traditions, particularly in the practice of Nyasa, which involved the mental placement of specific mantras or ideas on different parts of the body. The technique was later refined and systematized by Swami Satyananda Saraswati, the founder of the Bihar School of Yoga. Swami Satyananda introduced Yoga Nidra as a comprehensive practice that combines elements of relaxation, visualization, and meditation.

Samskaras:

Central to the practice of Yoga Nidra is the understanding of samskaras, which are the subtle imprints or impressions stored in the subconscious mind. Samskaras are formed through past experiences, thoughts, emotions, and actions, and they influence our behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes. During Yoga Nidra, as we enter a state of deep relaxation, the mind becomes receptive, allowing us to access and explore these samskaras, bringing them into conscious awareness. By consciously acknowledging and releasing these impressions, we can gradually transform negative patterns and cultivate positive ones.

Sankalpa:

Sankalpa, meaning "resolve" or "intention," is a powerful aspect of Yoga Nidra. It involves setting a positive, heartfelt intention at the beginning and end of the practice. The sankalpa is a concise statement that reflects our deepest aspirations and desires. By repeating the sankalpa during the practice, we establish a direct connection with the subconscious mind, enabling us to reprogram deeply ingrained patterns and align our actions with our true purpose. The sankalpa acts as a seed planted in the fertile soil of the subconscious, nurturing positive changes in our lives.

Influence of Brainwaves:

During Yoga Nidra, the brain undergoes a shift in brainwave patterns. In the waking state, the brain operates predominantly in the beta frequency, associated with active thinking and alertness. As we transition into deep relaxation, the brain shifts

to slower brainwave frequencies, such as alpha and theta. Alpha waves are associated with relaxation and a calm, meditative state, while theta waves are linked to deep relaxation, creativity, and accessing the subconscious mind. This brainwave modulation allows for increased receptivity and the potential for transformative experiences during Yoga Nidra.

Conclusion:

Yoga Nidra offers a profound pathway to relaxation, self-discovery, and personal transformation. Its history, rooted in ancient yogic traditions, has evolved into a comprehensive practice that facilitates deep relaxation and conscious awareness. Through the exploration of samskaras, Yoga Nidra provides a unique opportunity to examine and transform deeply ingrained patterns stored in the subconscious mind. By setting a powerful sankalpa and working with specific brainwave frequencies, practitioners can enhance their ability to access the subconscious, harness positive change, and align with their true potential. Embarking on a journey through Yoga Nidra opens doors to profound self-exploration, inner healing, and the awakening of inner wisdom.

The human brain operates at different frequencies known as brainwaves, which can be measured using electroencephalography (EEG). Each brainwave frequency corresponds to a different state of consciousness and is associated with specific mental and physiological states. Here are the primary brainwave frequencies and their characteristics:

- **Beta Waves (12-30 Hz):** Beta waves are associated with waking consciousness, active thinking, and alertness. They are prevalent during normal, active mental and physical activity, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and engaging in daily tasks.
- **Alpha Waves (8-12 Hz):** Alpha waves occur when the brain is in a relaxed, calm, and meditative state. They are associated with a state of relaxed focus and can be experienced during activities such as meditation, gentle yoga, and creative endeavors. Alpha waves promote a sense of inner peace, relaxation, and enhanced visualization abilities.
- **Theta Waves (4-8 Hz):** Theta waves are associated with deep relaxation, daydreaming, creativity, and accessing the subconscious mind. They are prevalent during deep meditation, hypnosis, and REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. Theta waves are often associated with vivid imagery, intuition, and accessing deeper levels of consciousness.
- **Delta Waves (0.5-4 Hz):** Delta waves are the slowest brainwave frequency and are most commonly observed during deep sleep or states of profound unconsciousness. They are associated with restorative sleep, physical healing, and regeneration. Delta waves are crucial for overall well-being and rejuvenation.
- **Gamma Waves (above 30 Hz):** Gamma waves are the fastest brainwave frequency and are associated with heightened cognitive functioning, information processing, and increased focus. They have been linked to states of heightened perception, advanced learning, and expanded consciousness.

It's important to note that the brain does not operate exclusively in one brainwave frequency at a time. Instead, different frequencies coexist, and their dominance can vary depending on the individual's state of mind and activity level.

In the context of Yoga Nidra, the practice typically involves transitioning from beta waves (the waking state) to alpha and theta waves (relaxed and meditative states). This shift in brainwave frequencies allows for deep relaxation, increased receptivity, and the potential for accessing and transforming subconscious patterns and beliefs.

Yoga Nidra encompasses several techniques that facilitate deep relaxation, self-awareness, and inner transformation. Here are some of the key techniques commonly used in Yoga Nidra:

- **Body Awareness:** Yoga Nidra often begins with a practice of systematically bringing awareness to different parts of the body. This technique, known as "rotation of consciousness," involves mentally focusing on specific body parts, one at a time, to relax and release tension, while cultivating a sense of deep relaxation and connection with the physical body.
- **Breath Awareness:** Breath awareness is an essential technique in Yoga Nidra. Practitioners are guided to observe the natural flow of their breath without attempting to control or manipulate it. By becoming aware of the breath, individuals cultivate a state of present-moment awareness and connect with the natural rhythm of their bodies.
- **Sankalpa (Intention Setting):** Sankalpa is the practice of setting a positive and heartfelt intention or resolve. During Yoga Nidra, individuals are encouraged to identify and repeat a short, positive affirmation or intention that resonates with their deepest aspirations. The sankalpa is repeated during the practice to establish a direct connection with the subconscious mind, facilitating personal transformation and growth.
- **Visualization and Imagery:** Visualization techniques are employed in Yoga Nidra to engage the power of the mind and imagination. Practitioners are guided to create and hold mental images of specific places, symbols, or experiences that evoke a sense of peace, joy, or healing. These visualizations help to activate the creative potential of the mind and promote deep relaxation and emotional well-being.
- **Awareness of Sensations and Feelings:** Yoga Nidra involves a heightened awareness of physical sensations, emotions, and feelings. By paying attention to the subtle sensations arising in the body and the emotions that surface, individuals develop an ability to observe these experiences without judgment or attachment, cultivating a sense of inner spaciousness and acceptance.
- **Yoga Nidra Scripts and Guided Instructions:** Experienced Yoga Nidra facilitators or teachers often use specific scripts or guided instructions to lead individuals through the practice. These scripts typically include a combination of relaxation techniques, body awareness, breath awareness, visualization, and suggestions for deep relaxation and transformation.
- **Rotation of Opposites:** This technique involves mentally experiencing and moving between opposite sensations or emotions, such as warmth and

coolness, heaviness and lightness, joy and sorrow. By consciously experiencing and accepting these opposites, practitioners develop a broader perspective and expand their capacity to hold opposing aspects of life in balance.

These techniques are skillfully combined and sequenced to guide practitioners into a state of deep relaxation, heightened self-awareness, and expanded consciousness during Yoga Nidra. Each technique serves a specific purpose and contributes to the overall transformative experience of the practice.

Here are clear instructions to help students develop their own script for a personalized Yoga Nidra practice:

- **Find a Quiet and Peaceful Space:** Choose a quiet and comfortable space where you can practice Yoga Nidra without disturbances. Create an environment that promotes relaxation, such as dim lighting, a soft cushion or mat, and any props that provide physical support.
- **Set an Intention:** Reflect on your intention or sankalpa for your Yoga Nidra practice. Consider what you would like to cultivate, heal, or transform within yourself. Formulate a positive and heartfelt intention that resonates with your deepest aspirations.
- **Body Scan and Relaxation:** Begin your script by guiding yourself through a body scan and relaxation. Direct your attention to each part of your body, starting from the top of your head and moving down to your toes. Describe the sensation of relaxation and release as you move through each body part, allowing any tension or stress to melt away.
- **Breath Awareness:** Include a segment in your script that focuses on breath awareness. Guide yourself to observe the natural flow of your breath without trying to change it. Encourage deep and relaxed breathing, allowing each breath to bring you into a state of calm and presence.
- **Visualization and Imagery:** Incorporate visualizations and imagery into your script. Guide yourself to imagine serene and beautiful scenes that evoke feelings of peace, joy, and healing. Encourage the use of all senses to fully immerse yourself in these visualizations, engaging with the mental images as vividly as possible.
- **Deep Relaxation and Transformation:** Devote a portion of your script to deep relaxation and transformation. Suggest a sense of surrender and let go, inviting the release of any negative thoughts, emotions, or limiting beliefs. Encourage a feeling of inner spaciousness, acceptance, and connection to your true self.
- **Sankalpa (Intention):** Include a section in your script for repeating your sankalpa. State your intention with conviction and sincerity, affirming your resolve to manifest positive change in your life. Repeat your sankalpa several times, allowing its essence to permeate your subconscious mind.
- **Closing and Integration:** Conclude your script with a gentle and gradual return to wakefulness. Guide yourself to become aware of your physical body, the space around you, and the sounds in the environment. Offer

gratitude for the practice and take a few moments to reflect on any insights or experiences that arose during your Yoga Nidra session.

Remember that the script you create is personal and unique to your intentions and needs. Allow your creativity to flow, and feel free to modify and adapt the script as you progress in your practice. Embrace this opportunity to tailor the experience to support your own transformation, well-being, and self-discovery.

Example script:

Opening:

Welcome to this Yoga Nidra class focused on deep transformation into bliss, love, and compassion. Find a comfortable position, lying on your back with your arms by your sides and palms facing up. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in, and as you exhale, release any tension in your body.

Relaxation and Body Awareness:

Bring your awareness to your body. Feel the points of contact between your body and the surface beneath you. Feel the gentle support of the ground beneath you, fully supporting and holding you.

Now, take a moment to scan your body from head to toe, gently observing any areas of tension or discomfort. As you breathe out, let go of any tension, allowing your body to soften and relax. Feel a sense of surrender and release with each breath out.

Sankalpa (Intention):

Take a moment to connect with your heartfelt intention, your sankalpa. Allow a positive and loving intention to arise from within you. Repeat this intention silently to yourself three times with conviction and sincerity.

"Through this practice of Yoga Nidra, I invite deep transformation into bliss, love, and compassion. I open myself to the limitless potential of my heart."

Rotation of Consciousness:

Now, bring your attention to different parts of your body as I guide you through a rotation of consciousness. Simply listen to the instructions and shift your awareness to each body part as mentioned, without any effort or physical movement.

Starting with your right hand, bring your awareness to your right thumb, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, fifth finger, palm, back of the hand, wrist, lower arm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, and armpit. Now, shift your attention to your left hand and repeat the same process, moving through each part of the left hand in the same manner.

Continue this process, moving through each body part, allowing your awareness to gently flow from one part to the next. Moving through the right and left side of your body, include the right and left foot, toes, ankles, lower legs, knees, thighs, hips, abdomen, chest, lower back, upper back, shoulders, neck, face, and the top of the head.

Experience each body part as a separate point of awareness, relaxing and releasing any tension with each breath out. Feel a sense of profound relaxation and a deep connection to your body.

Breath Awareness and Visualizations:

Shift your attention to your breath. Simply observe the natural flow of your breath without trying to change it. Notice the gentle rhythm, the rise, and fall of your abdomen or the sensation of the breath at the nostrils.

Now, visualize yourself standing in a serene and beautiful natural setting. Imagine being surrounded by a soft, golden light that fills your entire being. Feel the warmth and radiance of this light enveloping you, infusing you with a deep sense of love and compassion.

As you continue to breathe, imagine this golden light expanding and radiating from your heart center, flowing outwards to all beings in the universe. With each breath, feel love and compassion expanding, encompassing the entire world.

Deep Transformation into Bliss:

Now, shift your attention to the space between your eyebrows, the third eye center. Visualize a divine light glowing in this space, illuminating your inner wisdom and guiding you towards deep transformation.

With each breath in, feel this divine light expanding and filling your entire being. As you exhale, release any limiting beliefs, fears, or negative emotions. Allow yourself to be completely immersed in this radiant light, experiencing a profound sense of bliss and transformation.

Closing:

As we come to the end of this practice, bring your awareness back to your breath. Take a few deep breaths, feeling the energy of love and compassion flowing through you. Gently wiggle your fingers and toes, and when you feel ready, slowly open your eyes.

Take a moment to honor the transformation you have experienced during this Yoga Nidra practice. Carry this sense of bliss, love, and compassion with you as you move through your day, spreading light and kindness to yourself and others.

Thank you for joining this Yoga Nidra practice. May you continue to cultivate deep transformation, bliss, love, and compassion in your life. Namaste.

Andean Cosmovision

Before the Inca Empire

When we think about the Andean Cosmovision, our first approach is to think about the Incas, but the Incas were just the tip of the iceberg of a way of living that goes back many thousands of years ago.

The first inhabitants of the land were nomads and hunters that appeared **years** ago. The first vestiges of human settlements were found **8.000 years** ago with agricultural labor and animal domestication apparition, mainly camelids such as llamas, huanacos, and vicuñas.

The most ancient civilization known is the one found in the area of **Caral, about 5000 years ago**, in the North of Lima, where they shared a mystical religious belief in relation to a fire god which its members worshiped in a custom made architecture designed in the form of temples to sit around giant fire pits and perform rituals and sacrifices.

The **Chavin** culture appeared around **3.000 years ago** in the central Andean region, close to Huaraz. They established a much more intricate religious system where the clerk would mediate between men and God, interpreting the messages induced by plant medicine mystical experiences, mainly San Pedro. Their pottery and cultural manifestation are represented by anthropomorphic figures combined with feline, bird, and serpent features. They had a rigorous belief system that would include sacrifices to the gods and severe punishments for those who failed to comply with the stipulations within the kingdom.

To the south of Lima, **2800 years ago**, the **Paracas** culture was found in the middle of the desert. They developed and refined their arts and crafts, creating beautiful textiles with bright colors. They domesticated animals and developed a philosophy of reincarnation and the view of life as a preparation for death. They became famous for their mummification technique, where they would prepare the dead body in a basket with their favorite objects, some food, and drink and wrap it up using several layers of fabric. They then would bury them in an underground cave and often come to visit their elders and relatives. They had a shamanistic approach to life, and they would also have high-ranked priests to perform the rituals, offerings, and sacrifices. They had the peculiarity of having a long skull deformation, which they practiced by putting plaques and pressing them at a young age.

Then we will have the cultures of **Moche, Nazca, and Wari**. These cultures each contributed to the formation of the Andean Cosmovision and the cultural and organizational heritage that the Incas would receive.

The Moche, 100 – 800 bc, were warriors and expanded the knowledge of surgery at different levels, being the most representative of the Tumi, a ceremonial knife used to remove parts of the brain or treat deep wounds. They were remaining parts of rocks and weapons.

The Nazca culture, 100 bc – 800 a.d, was well known for its mastery of hydraulics. Living in the desert near Ica, to the south of Lima, they would channel water from afar distances using underground tunnels, dams, and different elevation angles. They are also known for their prolific musical instruments and the famous Nazca Lines, which nature still remains a mystery.

The Wari culture, 500- 1000 a.d, was an expansionist empire that conquered new territories, not only by using force but also by giving gifts and offering protection from foreign invasions. They arranged weddings between important families along with the territory and established some sort of Andean Confederation with other territories.

Finally, the **Chimu** culture, which lived between the years **1000- 1200 ac** in the Lambayeque region, was one of the most elaborate cultures in the performance of their adoration towards their main deity, Naylamp.

They were masters in the production and refinement of Gold and Silver, making beautiful pieces that they would use for the divination of their deities. They would also use different shapes and colors of feathers for their rituals. The Incas learned how to give a majestic aspect of their cult to the father sun from them.

The Inca Empire

The genesis of their culture is commonly represented by the story of a man and a woman emerging from a natural and sacred space such as a Lake or a Cave, like the story of the first Inca and his consort, Manco Qapaq and Mama Ocllo.

They emerged from Lake Titicaca under the guidance and instruction of Taita Inti Wiracocha, who gave them the mission to look for fertile land to start a civilization and thus establish a societal structure that would live in harmony with nature and worship the God Father Sun.

When the golden rod or Varayoc given to Manco Qapaq sunk in fertile soil, he would know that would be the place to start their mission. From there, they had to undergo different challenges, like defeating the Chancas who had ruled and lived in the south region for a long time.

After defeating them, they would be able to have the surplus of resources that would enable them to start partnering up with other families and macro ethnicities through the concept of reciprocity, where they would organize parties and gifts such as Coca, Corn, and Chicha, Mullu, ceramics, and textiles, to increase their labor capacity and power of persuasion.

Their vertical societal structure would be represented by the Inca and its family, the (Misayocs), who interpreted the message from the Wakas, the (Curacao), who were the head of the different royal families or Panaceas under the ruling of the empire, and the (Yanas) who were men of trust who ruled over the ayllus or families of ordinary men, the military and the men of labor.

Their most significant achievement was their administrative system, expressed in a road system that linked their main temples and populations that had tambos or places for rest or accumulation of resources. In the Andean Cosmovision, man and nature were one. In this context, man does not rule or control nature, but he coexists and learns to live with her in harmony. In this natural order, man worships and establishes a direct relationship with the different elements around him, such as the Sun (Inti), the Moon (Killa), The Wind (Wayra), the Mountains (Apu), the Lakes (Cochas), and Mother Earth (Pachamama).

They held a sacred conception of time and space, also known as Pacha, where past, present, and future coexisted, allowing their community members to communicate with their ancestors and the divine spirits (who) lived with them within this circular conception of time.

They had no idea about age or time in terms of days or years. They measured age according to people's working capacities and time in relation to the different seasons and times of harvest.

There were no cardinal points, just notions of above (Hanan), below (Hurin), left (lloque), and right (pañan). They had no apparent writing skills, but they would meet their needs by creating the quipus in which they could count by tenths, hundreds, and thousands and describe the situation Of a village or the outcome of a battle.

Their physical world in which we live was part of a tripartition known as the three worlds, namely:

Hanan Pacha- The celestial realm

Kai Pacha- The here and now

Uku Pacha- The underworld of the dead

These worlds were interconnected and had a stretch relationship with each other, being accessible for an ordinary man to communicate with the world of the dead and one of the gods, asking and receiving advice.

Each of these worlds also has a totem or animal spirit that rules its temporal and space dimensions:



The condor - The heavenly realm
The puma - The here and now
The snake - The underworld

The Incas lived within the frames of this cosmovision. To exist and maintain the social order of their ever-growing empire, the Tahuantinsuyo, also known as the Kingdom of the Four Directions, instructed their inhabitants into the practice of a universal moral code known as **Ama Sua, Ama Quella, and Ama Lula** (Don't steal, don't be lazy or a liar) and the laws of reciprocity known as Ayni, where each Ayllu or family was in the obligation to collaborate with their immediate neighbors in the development of different tasks such as agricultural labor, the building of private and public spaces and the protection of the lands ruled by the Inca Empire. This system was passed on to every new territory conquered, giving them the option to assimilate their culture and pay tribute to the Inca or be destroyed.

This community work was classified in the following way:

Ayni – exchange from family to family
Minka – work for the Local Community
Mita – work for the Tahuantinsuyo

There was also a moral philosophy on how should one approach the different tasks and labors of daily life within the Tahuantinsuyo, called the *Sumaq Kawsay* or Good Living:

Allin Munay- Do things with Love
Allin Runway- Do things Right
Allin Yachay- Learn Well, Teach Well

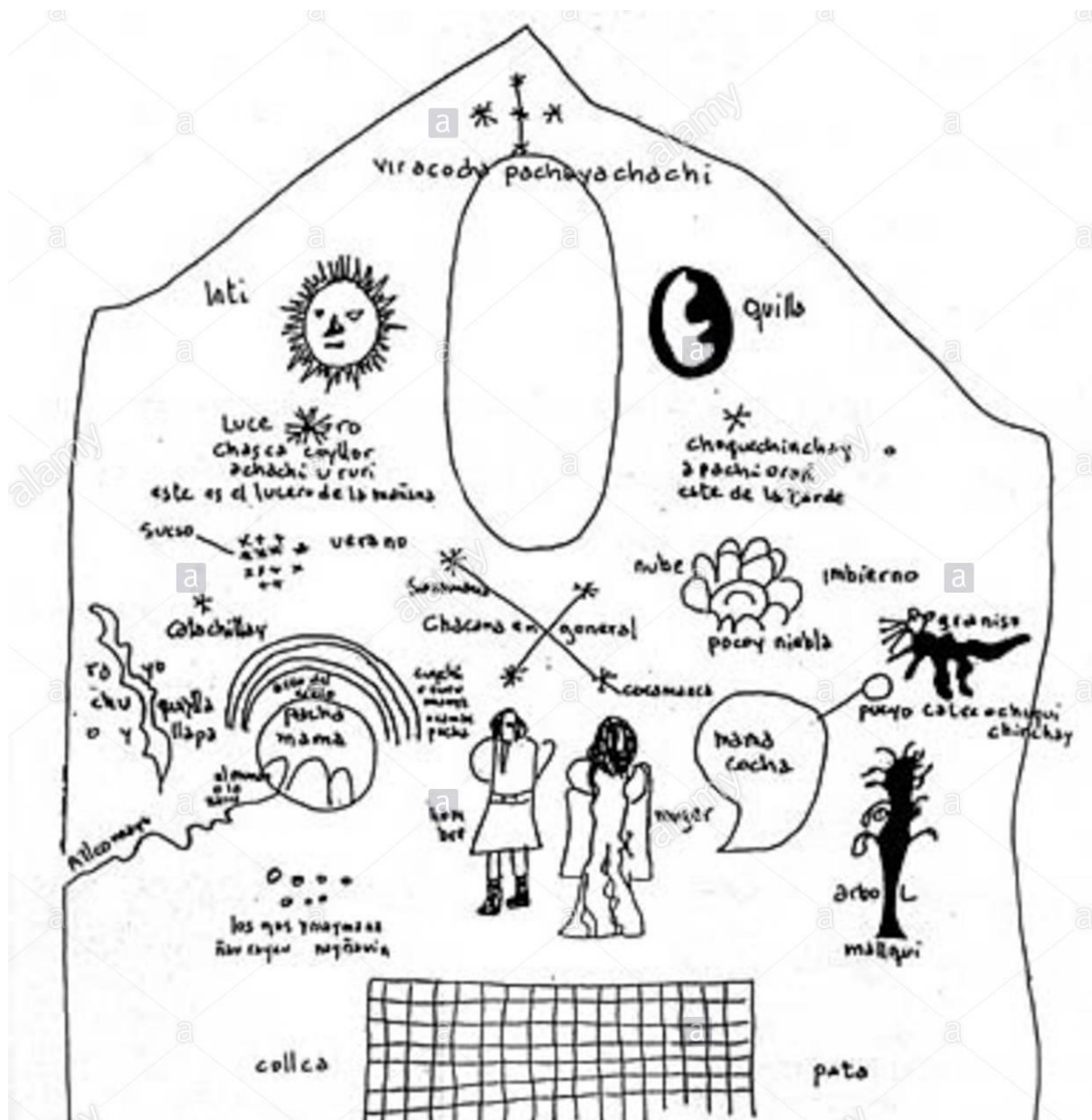
The Chakana

The Chakana, or the so-called Andean Cross, is the ultimate expression of the wisdom achieved by the Andean Culture. It synthesizes the whole space—temporal interpretation of their cosmovision, serving as a calendar, a compass, and a pictorial representation of their values and belief system.

The architecture and symmetry of the Andean cross are working on different levels. Although it is perceived as a unity, it can be subdivided into various levels of depth and understanding at first sight.

The concept of oneness, of something existing by itself, was deprived of significance and meaning; It was regarded as being in an orphan state and without the possibility of living and procreating itself.

This oneness could only be understood in the light of two opposite forces that complement each other, such as Pachacamaq (masculine) and Pachamama (feminine). Through this concept, they understood Wiraqocha, the innate order of the universe.



Pachacamaq represents;

The sun, the right side, animals, mountains and snow peaks, the Inca, The Apu, Work Power, Daytime, The river, lighting, and hail.

Pachamama represents;

The Moon, the left side, vegetables, flat land, the qoya, the mother, fertility, the lakes, Night-Time, and Earth-Quakes.

When looking at the three steps on the ladder, each of its four corners is representative of the tripartition in their belief system; The three worlds, the three totems, the three attitudes for good living, and the three tributes to others. In the quatripartition of the cross, we find the different stations of the year, the cardinal directions, the movement of the sun, and the time for the solstices and the equinoxes.

Also, when circumscribed in its axis and following a 45-degree angle line from North to South and from left to right, it shows the Qhapaq Ñan (also known as the Inca Trail, or the road of truth which follows the path of the sun) that was the main guideline in the building of their temples and main roads within their civilization.

Kintu and the Coca Leaf

The use and propagation of the coca leaf was widely used by the cultures that preceded the Incas. It was used as an anesthetic and an energetic incentive for the working class engaged in physical activities throughout the land.

The Incas then restricted their use and its cultivation to the royal family and was only harvested on their land, using it for ceremonial purposes such as praying and giving thanks, trading for goods with neighboring communities, as an oracle for predicting the future and as an act of appreciation towards their most significant relations.

THE INCAS (1200- 1533)**The Inca Empire**

The genesis of their culture is commonly represented by the story of a man and a woman emerging from a natural and sacred space such as a Lake or a Cave, like the story of the first Inca and his consort, Manco Qapaq and Mama Ocllo, or the one of the Ayar Brothers.

The first emerged from Lake Titicaca under the guidance and instruction of Taita Inti Wiracocha, who gave them the mission to look for fertile land and where to start a civilization and establish a societal structure that would live in harmony with nature and worship the God Father Sun.

When the golden rod or Varayoc given to Manco Qapaq sunk in fertile soil, he would know that would be the place to start their mission. From there, they had to undergo different challenges, like defeating the Chancas who had ruled and lived in the south region for a long time.

The second is the story told after the name of the Ayar brothers, who, by the will of Wiracocha, emerged from the land, grouped into four brothers and four sisters. The first brother to become extinct was Ayar Cache, who was befooled by his brothers to go into a cave near where they had appeared in Apu Huanacauri. They sealed the entrance so that he could never come back again. The next one to be gone was Ayar Oche, who they said, after going to the Hanan Pacha to speak with father sun and being instructed to tell his brother to change his name from Ayar Manco Manco Capac, became petrified. After that, Manco Capac, Ayar Auca, and their sisters went to Cusco and settled in Qoricancha after convincing the present ethnicities that they were sons of the sun god.

Either by defeating by force or convincing them by wit, they would be able to have the surplus of resources that would enable them to start partnering up with other families and macro ethnicities through the concept of reciprocity, where they would organize parties and gifts such as Coca, Corn Chicha, Aji, Mollu, ceramics, and textiles, to increase their labor and work capacity.

Their vertical societal structure would be represented by the Inca and its family (Royal Panaka), the Misayocs who interpreted the message from the Wakas, the Amautas or teachers encharged of keeping track of history and education, and the Curacao, who was the head administrator of the different ordinary families under the ruling of the empire, the Yanas and the Mitamaq who were men of trust who ruled over the ayllus or families of ordinary men abroad, the Kiphuyoq who was in charge of the accountancy of the Incas deposits or tanpus, the military, the chasquis, and the ordinary men seen as a workforce on behalf of the Inca.

The Incas were believed to be part of a dynasty coming from the sun, which had created a sacred form represented by a divine couple, embodying the concept of Yanantin, where the opposites become a complement of each other. This brought fertility and allowed life to thrive, infused with the spirit force of divine

creation. This dualistic figure would command their vision and highly influence their way of ruling the empire, military organization, and how they perceived this world.

The Inka was believed to have the power to manifest water, bring life where there is death, to move stones in the form of Pirqas or walls. He was the one with the ability to multiply corn and distribute it to the different villages in exchange for their workforce and loyalty.

In the Incan Empire, there were two dynasties, the Hanan and The Urinand. The succession of the Inca was not made by direct blood succession but based on skill, lineage, and moral capacity. These two dynasties were initially thought to alternate their ruling position within the mind frame of a western monarchy. Still, later studies show that the most possibly ruled together, complementing each other and receiving advice and support simultaneously.

Their most significant achievement was their highly skilled administrative system expressed in a road system that linked their main temples and populations, stretching from Ecuador in the North to Chile in the South, through the backbone of The Andean Mountain Region. The Tambos or Royal deposits were places where the local administrators would account for the different kinds of supplies. Those were to be used to redistribute goods throughout the empire as a reserve in case of drought and scarcity. It was also a place of rest for the armies and the chasquis, where they could replenish themselves with weapons, food, and water.

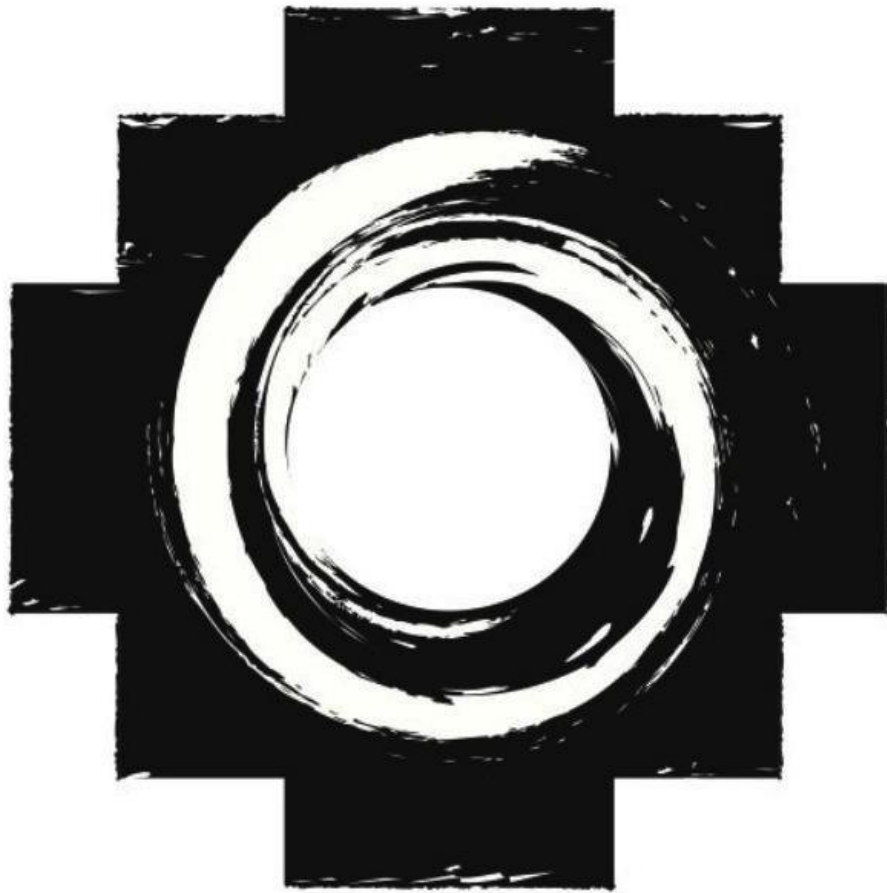
Pachakuteq- The ninth Inka

In the times of the Inka named Wiracocha, the Chancas invaded again and made him run away to Yucay with his legitimate son Inca Urcon. The Chancas were vicious and vengeful, destroying and looting the city of Cusco. But, Wiracocha had another son, who was not officially recognized and had been exiled, Tupac Yupanqui. He had a vision from the god sun telling him to eradicate the Chanca and re-establish order, and so he did. He went after his father, who did not recognize him. He had to fight his half-brother to earn the title of the Inca Yupanqui, who later became the great Pachacutec, the one who created the world again and is responsible for the most significant territorial military expansion within the Inca history.

Atahualpa- the twelfth Inka

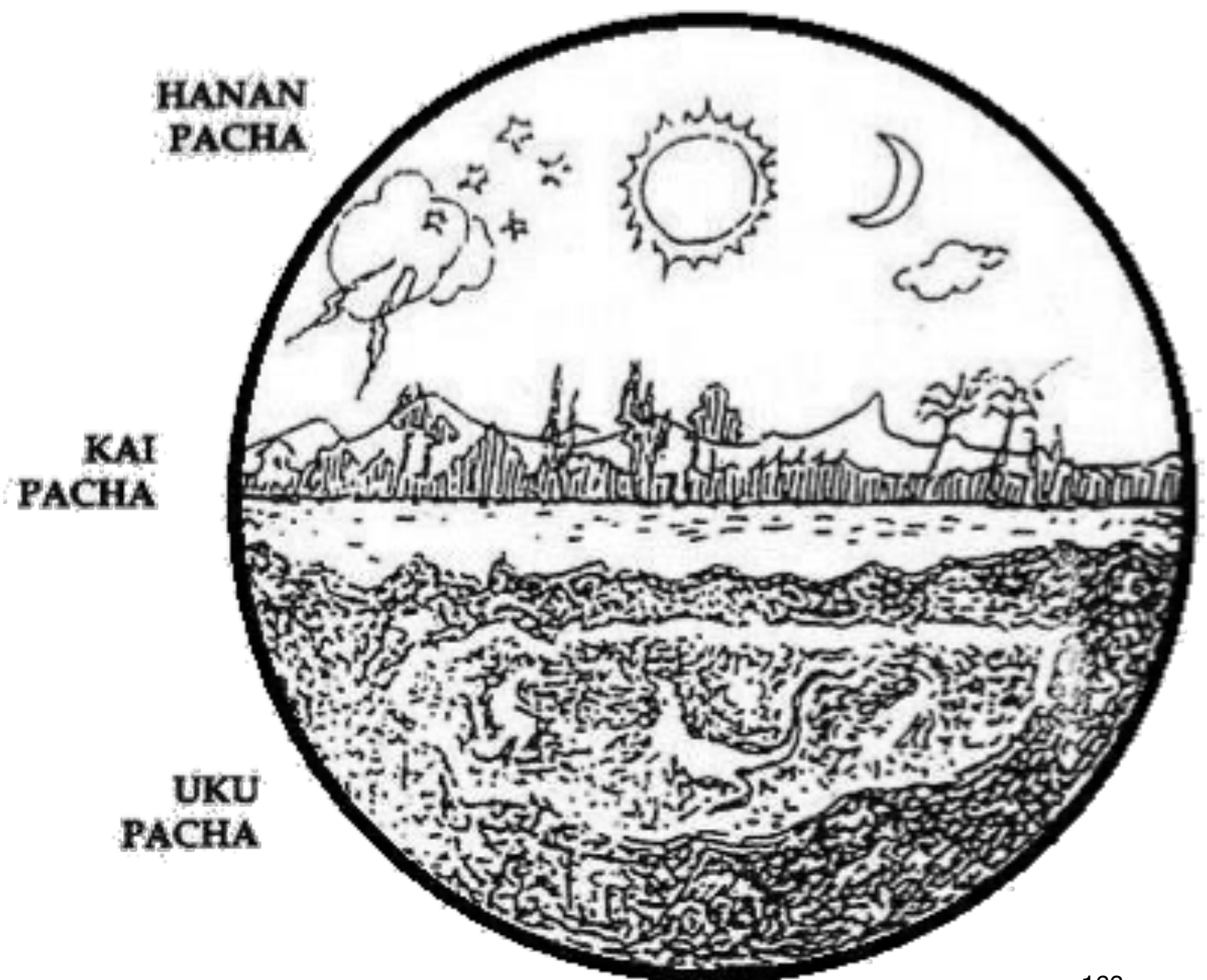
In the times of the Inca Huayna Capac, he had two sons, each with a woman of the different dynasties; the current hegemonic dynasty was the one of his

brother Huascar who claimed arrogantly to be the natural owner of the Mascaypacha, the ruling of empire. Huascar disrespected the previous agreements of his father and started earning the hatred of the royal families and his father's men of trust in the military. His father's men admired the qualities of Atahualpa, who had won several battles in the North, who, with their help, was able to defeat Huascar and had him see the killing of his own family. Soon after that, he would meet the Spanish in Cajamarca, where he was betrayed and outsmarted by the Spanish, who imprisoned him, extorted him, and killed him.



The story of Tupac Amaru

Jose Gabriel Condorcanqui was a mestizo son of Tupac Amaru 1st, the last Sapa Inca. He had been raised by catholic priests and had also learned the Quechua Language. He changed his Spanish costumes and started dressing and acting on behalf of the independence of the Indians from the exploitation (Aduana, Alcabala, Mita Minera) of the Crown. All until he was ex-communicated from the church, prosecuted, apprehended, and tortured for his rebellious acts. The church used this as an exemplary act where they tried to tear him apart using horses pulling from his limbs, and later cutting him into pieces and sending each of his bodily parts, including his head, in different directions. He was one of the last Incas, and the myth of the Inkari says that once the limbs come back together with the head, the return of Inka will come and establish order in the Andean Region.



Teaching Methodology

The Art of Teaching

When you get to teach your first real class, and you find yourself preparing the space, setting the mats, greeting your students, and finally are sitting to give it a go, you realize how intricate, challenging, and yet inspiring being a yoga teacher can be.

I still remember the look on the faces of my first students. I tried to be as friendly as I could despite being very nervous. When you first teach, the most valuable thing is your script. It is common for new teachers to carry their yoga notes and place them next to their teacher mat. There is nothing like the feeling of not having to look at them and having the confidence to speak a bit louder and then lower your voice to soften the practice. There is nothing like the feeling of stepping out of your mat and counting five silent breaths instinctively as you walk around the room, observing your students and seeing the ways that you can enhance their practice with a little adjustment here and there. That does not happen by chance or destiny. It takes time, skill, and the belief that teaching these classes is your life's true calling.

As you practice your teaching, you develop an eye for the practice. You become more receptive and compassionate. You start to see that all bodies are different, but they all want to understand life and themselves better and that, somehow, you have become the channel by which this transformation may occur. Teaching Yoga is a real blessing that carries the responsibility to take good care of others in the most respectful way.

Becoming a yoga teacher means that you must continuously cultivate yourself. You must read, do your self-practice, take on other people's classes and be always open to seeing things differently, even if it challenges everything you believe in this very moment to be true.

We wish you the best journey ever in this quest of self-discovery, service, and community. May you find this teaching methodology useful for taking full responsibility and awareness of the power, you carry to create beauty and wisdom in every word and action you share with your students.

Namaste

Preparing for Class

1. Arrive Early, at least half an hour before class.
2. Clean and clear the space. Broom and Incense.
3. Set up the Class. Be visible and available.
4. Create an altar. Candles, crystals, flowers, teachers.
5. Greet your students. Ask them how they are feeling today, and read the energy of the group. Ask for previous experience and any injuries for new students.
6. Explain what Yoga is for you and how it can help to improve life, awareness, and motivation.
7. Invite a minute of silence and invoke your intention or focus on a specific topic for the day.
8. Take a deep breath and let the journey begin.

Types of student

- Explorer
- Mystical
- Social
- Fitness

Types of teachers

- Technical
- Sage
- Trainer
- Charmer

Types of Class

- Theme based/Topic of the day
- Physical workout
- Spiritually-Orientated
- Restorative/Relaxation
- Mindfulness

Types of Setting

- Gym
- Yoga Studio
- Festival
- Workshop
- Private Class

Refinement, enhancing the practice

There is always a way to make things better. From the standpoint of a student or a teacher, there is always a way to enhance the practice and the teachings. That is what refinement is about, how to either give the correct instructions at the precise moment or how to apply internally the principles that may provide you the sensation of being more grounded and freer within your asana practice.

The refinement comes not only from reading these textual recommendations but also from daring yourself to evolve in your practice.

There are times when after much effort, we finally feel comfortable with our teaching, and we decide to repeat our script again and again because it makes us feel comfortable and loved by our students. That is common, but the teacher must always seek better ways to improve their practice, especially as you become aware that not everybody has the same body. Not everybody can get into that pose straight away or can perform their practice the way you teach it for a determined audience.

Refinement is also a practice of self-inquiry and compassion.

Finding your voice and how to guide a class

When you first start teaching yoga classes, the first struggle we face is the quality of our energy as a yoga teacher. Much of this experience is guided by the way we express ourselves in front of the class. The tone of voice and the selection of words you use to create the flow within your practice determine the kind of teacher you are, the style you embrace, and the experience students will receive from your teachings.

When we introduce ourselves, the intention of the class, and what Yoga is about, we want to come from a friendly place where we transmit through our voice the result that your students can achieve from having a regular yoga practice. So, for this part, you may want to go for the 'Low and Slow' option within your speech. Newcomers are often very sensitive toward how they feel in the yoga room for the first time. They usually come from a process of wanting to feel loved and secure to build trust and appreciation for their own lives and bodies.

When we get into the core of the practice, you want to start building heat through a vinyasa or any kind of sequencing. You want to make sure that what you are saying is taken seriously, that even the slightest details are taken into consideration and that people get the sense of being guided and well-supported by the confidence transmitted through your instructions.

For this purpose, it is recommended to modulate your tone so that you can be heard in the back of the class and increase your script's speed so that people can feel that they are moving steadily through this myriad of instructions.

During the class, you want to build awareness of how you should alternate between both styles; Low and Slow, Loud and Fast. So, the best way to create a distinction as to when to use each is as follows:

When guiding a flow, bringing heat into the practice of getting students into a particular set of poses, you want to create energy and direction. You will be dealing mainly with concrete movements related to the physical parts of the body. For this kind of action, you use the Loud and Fast approach.

Once you are grounded in the pose, and the physical parts of the body are holding their position steadily, it's time for that kind of refinement you can do by subtle movements. For example, lengthening the skin, softening the face, opening the heart, or any other variations of the internal experience arising from the practice. Properly using the soft and slow approach allows people to relax the overload within the gross body and find the balance in its complementary force- the inner body experience.

Always remember one of the most well-known B.K .S Iyengar aphorisms...

The Essence of the practice is Sthiram Sukham Asanam.

That means we must find the balance between a firm physical/gross body and a soft and blissful inner/subtle body—the perfect balance between effort and surrender.

One last element that is key when handling the space is the use of your silence. Silence creates space and opportunity for your students to go inside and experience the quality of their breath and their mind and ultimately bring awareness of the effort and the obstacles they might be facing at the time.

That is the opportunity to walk around the class and give individual adjustments to those in the most need. Silence is key for meditation and the withdrawal of the senses. One of the challenges you will face when in silence is how long your silence should last. That is a very particular option, but you should usually allow your silence to be as long as five breaths count after you have given the complete instruction.

Fundamental Principles of Alignment

These basic principles serve as a guideline to experience the asana in its fullness, first aligning to the supreme, then acknowledging the physical awareness required, and finally refining the energetic aspect of the pose within the subtle body or the inner movements.

1. **Open to grace** – Create the atmosphere to receive what you need.
2. **Breathing Instructions** – Be clear of the type of breath and its purpose.
3. **Foundation** – Explain the basic form of the asana from the bottom up.
4. **Focal Point** – Identify where the energy is being drawn in and from where it's being sent.
 1. The three focal points are :
 2. The core of the pelvis
 3. The bottom of the heart
 4. Upper palate
5. **Muscular Energy**: Comes from the body's periphery into the focal point. It creates stability, strength, and physical integration in the pose. It draws the energy from the skin into the bone, from the foundation of the pose into the mid-line of the body.
6. **Inner Rotation**: An ever-expanding energy spiral that moves outward from the core. It rotates the legs inward, moves the thighs backward, and widens the sit bones.

Outer rotation: An ever-narrowing energy spiral that moves inward towards the core. The outer spiral rotates the legs outward, moves the tailbone and thighs forward, and draws the pelvis and thighs closer.

7. **Organic energy:** Comes from the focal point into the body's periphery. It increases expansion and flexibility and brings freedom into the pose. It expands the limbs away from the mid-line of the body.
8. **Find the Center:** After having achieved the basic form of the asana, look for the symmetry of the pose. Keep the opposite actions in balance.

Use of Props

- Bricks or Blankets. Elevation or extension of the ground.
- Belts: Forward bendings. Short arms. No extension in the back of the legs.
- Bolsters: Back bendings. Fear of going back. Not being supported.
- Walls: Inversions. Fear of falling over.
- Chairs: Elongations, pressing and extending body.

Adjustments

When the time comes to adjust your students, you want to make sure that you have the previous consent of your student. Let them know when the adjustment is about to happen. Be explicit about the kind of action and the body parts involved in this refinement action and the benefits that this action will bring into the practice of that particular asana.

Being on your feet and avoiding unnecessary body-to-body contact is key to making the student feel safe and supported. Using the side of your body, such as the legs and hips, can be very useful to give a sense of security, respect, and stability.

The actions of the hands as you adjust can be very sensitive at all levels, physically, emotionally, and psychologically. To avoid misinterpretation, injury, or any awkwardness, below you can find the different kinds of touching that may occur.

Types of touching

1. Investigative: Checking for muscles to be active.
2. Directive: To move a muscle to show the energy of the pose.
3. Alerting: Quick pointer to bring awareness.
4. Adjusting: Firm action that offers the student inner movement.

5. Stabilizing: Using your body to give support, especially in balance poses.
6. Loving: An affirming touch motivates the student after a challenge.
7. Sensual: Improper. Rubbing the skin or staying longer than necessary.
8. Invasive: Touching sensitive parts such as groins, belly, and buttocks.

Qualities of a Yoga Teacher

In becoming a yoga teacher, there is a series of qualities that one should cultivate within themselves to hold that space and position in relation to others. These qualities comprehend sensitivity, compassion, ethical values, cleanliness, optimism, wisdom, moderation, punctuality, good attitude, receptivity, humility, boundaries, and patience.

Whether we are able to acknowledge it or not, to assume the position of a yoga teacher means that others will see you as their source of inspiration, trust, and knowledge. Students will tend to think you have all the answers to deepen their physical practice and spiritual growth. In this respect, it is always better to show yourself humbly, acknowledging your own process and showing yourself also as a student.

They will come to you sharing their personal history, doubts, fears, and an ever-growing list of the dreams and things they want to accomplish in the future. There are yoga teachers that want to be fully present and available during and after class and yoga teachers that need to draw clear boundaries with their students and personal life. There is, obviously, a third option which is to keep both in balance.

The act of always being there for others is a great act of compassion, but it can deplete your energy and personal space. It can also lead to confusion about becoming too intimate with your students. One should avoid by all means any kind of romantic affairs, casual flirting, or any improper physical conduct with students.

Here are some of the qualities of a yoga teacher:

Being welcoming to all students, being available, uplifting the spirit of the practitioners, being clear and authentic, sharing and cultivating knowledge, showing your enthusiasm towards the practice, honoring your teachers, never degrading other schools or philosophies, and helping in a humbling and compassionate way, encouraging all living beings to continuously live their life fully beyond attachment, judgment, fear, and expectation.

Make a list of the 10 most relevant qualities of a teacher.

Make a list of the 10 most relevant qualities of a student.

Yoga Nutrition – Moderate Diet

“Mild fresh sweet food taken in moderation is best for Yoga which requires increase of Sattva. Vegetarian diet is the foundation but with the proper nutrients. The yogic diet consists mainly of grains, dairy products, fruit, nuts, vegetables and ghee.” - Frawley

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* explains diet in some detail.

- I.58. Moderate diet means that one should eat slightly oily and sweet food, leaving one quarter of the stomach empty, eating as an offering to Shiva (the Divine awareness within oneself).
- I.59. One should avoid food that is too spicy, sour, peppery, salty and hot, sour vegetables, fermented rice, oily food like that made with sesame or mustard oils, wine, fish, meat, yogurt, buttermilk, kulattha, jujube, fried foods, asafoetida and garlic.
- I.60. One should know the following as food bad to eat. Recooked food, food that is too dry, too salty, too sour, or food that is mixed with bad vegetables.
- I.62. Good for Yoga includes grains like wheat, rice and barley, pure food, milk, ghee, raw sugar, butter, rock candy, honey, spices like ginger, pure vegetables, beans like mung and pure water.
- I.63. The Yogi should take food that is nourishing, sweet, a little oily, mixed with ghee and nourishing to the Dhatus (tissues), pleasant to the mind and suitable to conditions.

Asana is equated with diet in Hatha Yoga, which notes that firmness in Asana and right diet are the foundation for the practice of Pranayama.

Yoga Nutrition - utilizing the gunas and spices

“The main problem is that following a more austere or raw food yogic diet without concern for the doshas, one may eat food that is too light and so aggravate Vata. Yoga practitioners should modify their dietary approach according to their dosha.” - David Frawley

“Spices are generally heating and are recommended for kapha and vata though they can be drying for vata. Spices are stimulant and improve circulation to the head and mental function. Spices help the circulation and digestion and can be an antidote for certain hard to digest foods like meat and dairy. Spices help cleanse the channels as they burn up ama and reduce kapha.

Raw food is made more appropriate when in the tropics, in the summer, during the day, when it is hot out and when in the sun. Fruit and many vegetables can be great fresh but can also be harder to digest this way depending on the food item and constitution that is receiving it. Raw food is filled with mana and is very cleansing. This cleansing force can be deranging for vata. Almond oil, Ghee, sesame oil, fennel or asafoetida can help vata with this.

When one is feeling overheated and or acidic, raw food can be relieving for pitta dosha. Raw food can be paired with digestive spices (helps kapha). The Pitta constitutions do best with raw food as they have a strong fire of digestion and are less likely to become cold. Raw food is less likely to be an issue if not taken at the beginning of the meal.” - Basti

“In addition, there are special tapas, austerity or purification types of yogic diets that consist mainly of raw food or what was called roots and fruits (phala-mula). These are more for yogis living in the forest or done temporarily for detoxification purposes. Such raw diets bring in a lot of Prana but are not always good for building up the tissues. One needs a very good Agni, such as powerful Yoga practices can generate, in order to survive on them for very long, though all can benefit from them short term, particularly in the spring or summer, for their cleansing effects.”

- David Frawley

“Cooked food is recommended for its ease of digestion. It is great to have in temperate lands, in the winter, at night, or when it's cold. Many highly nourishing foods need to be cooked to be edible. Through cooking we are able to activate the healing powers of the spices that we cook with and infuse them into the oil we are using. Cooked food is recommended in cases of weakness in the digestive system and ojas. It can be good for cleansing or for rejuvenation. During the cooking process we can infuse mantras deeply into the food as well as our intention. Often times kicharee is recommended while people are undergoing pancha karma therapy, as its mixture of rice, mung bean and spices is known to return normalcy to the digestion.

Foods that have been spoiled, have been cooked a day ago or recooked have lower quality. Food that is frozen or canned or with preservatives has lower quality. Nonorganic food or food shipped from a distance will have lower quality. Food which has been fed negative intention during the growing, shipping or preparing has lower quality. Homegrown organic food and wild harvested food from a clean place are both deep medicine.” - Basti

“Physical disease mainly arises from taking in unwholesome food. Pratyahara affords us control of the senses so that we do not crave wrong food. When the senses are controlled, everything is controlled and no wrong or artificial cravings can arise. That is why Ayurveda emphasizes right use of the senses as one of the most important factors in right living and disease prevention. “ ~ David Frawley

Vedic Light and Tantric Energy Yogas

Dr David Frawley

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No Comments

By Acharya David Frawley (Pandit Vamadeva Shastri)

Tantra and Veda: One Tradition

A number of writers and teachers, particularly in Western academia, have tried to divide the two great traditions of India of Veda and Tantra as different or even contrary. Some Yoga teachers have uncritically taken up this view as well. Vedic and Tantric traditions are one, though with different orientations. The Vedic tradition is earlier and Tantra is one of its developments, mainly through the Puranas. Tantric teachings abound in the use of Vedic mantras and the mysticism of the Sanskrit alphabet. They use Vedic fire altars and practices and honor Vedic deities at an inner level. Inner Tantric Yoga reflects the four main Vedic deities of Agni, Soma, Vayu and Surya (the forces of fire, moon, wind and sun).

The simplest correlation between the Vedic and the Tantric is that whereas the Vedas emphasize the *Jyotirmaya Purusha*, ‘the Being or Person made of light’, the Tantras emphasize the *Shaktimaya Devi*, ‘the Goddess made of energy’. Yet light and energy as consciousness and force are one. The Purusha of light is one with its energy or Shakti. So the two traditions cannot be separated either. *We could call the Vedic Yoga a ‘Vedic Light Yoga’ and the Tantric Yoga a ‘Tantric Energy Yoga’.* The two are not only related historically but are complementary in their mantras and practices.

The Vedic view emphasizes the Shiva principle, though often under abstract principles of Brahman, Purusha and Atman, and in the form of Vedic deities (like Agni and Soma) which reflect the cosmic light form identified with Shiva. Yet the Vedas also recognize the Shakti principle as Vak or the power of the Divine Word, which is said to be the *Veda-Mata* or 'Mother of the Vedas'. The Goddess pervades the Vedas as the Vedic mantra, though many feminine deities are also there and each Vedic God has his corresponding Goddess!

The Tantric view emphasizes the Shakti principle as the great Goddess but recognizes the light principle with Shiva as 'Prakasha' or pure illumination. Tantric Yoga also aims at the realization of Atman and Brahman, defined both as the light and energy of consciousness, Chid-jyoti and Chit-Shakti.

Human and Nature Images

Another difference between Vedic and Tantric Yoga is that the Vedic deities are first of all powers of nature like Fire, Wind, Sun and Moon. Their human forms or anthropomorphic sides remain vague. They are seldom portrayed in the form of a human figure. Tantric Deities, on the other hand, like Shiva and Shakti, are first of all anthropomorphic figures, with a human body, gestures and ornaments defined and delineated quite clearly and frequently. Yet Tantric deities have a deep nature symbolism with the Goddess and the mountain stream and Shiva as the mountain, for example, so this distinction is only general.

The Vedas center around four great Devatas (principles of light) as Agni (fire), Soma (water and moon), Indra-Vayu (lightning) and Surya (the Sun), as the inner and outer forms of light in the universe. Agni is the power of speech, mantra and the Divine Word. Soma is the power of the mind, meditation and Divine bliss. Indra is the power of perception, discrimination and direct realization of the higher Self. Surya is the supreme light of the Self and the power of life on all levels. Yet each of these forms of light has its corresponding forms of energy as fire energy, lunar energy, solar energy and electrical energy.

Tantric Yoga revolves around these same forces as Sun, Moon, Lightning and Fire. These forces appear as Goddesses in Tantra with Soma, the lunar reflective force, as the Goddess Lalita or Tripura Sundari and the crown chakra and the cosmic mind. Vedic Indra relates to Tantric Chinnamasta as the power of lightning perception in the eyes, the third eye. Surya is the solar power of life and awareness, the Self in the heart, which is Bhadra Kali among the Goddesses. Agni is the Kundalini fire in the root chakra, which is the Goddess Bhairavi and the ultimate power of speech. Vayu or Wind is the general Kriya

Shakti force that is Kali in the broader sense as the cosmic Prana.

Both Vedic and Tantric Yogas teach how to awaken these four light and energy centers in the body. The fire in the three lower chakras (particularly the root chakra); the Moon in the three higher chakras (particularly the crown chakra); the Sun in the heart; and lightning working through the third eye as the general power of Shakti or energization. The Tantric Agni-Soma or Shiva-Shakti Yoga is another form of the Vedic Agni-Soma ritual on an internal level. Tantric Yoga which aims balancing Agni and Soma as Shiva and Shakti is a form of the Vedic Yoga.

Between Veda and Tantra on a practical level there is no real difference. Each has various levels of practices from the mundane to the transcendent, from rituals and mantras to formless meditation and Self-inquiry.

Shakti and the Vedas

The Vedic Rishis honored Shakti, which is primarily *Vak Shakti* or the ‘power of the Divine Word’. Their mantras are the manifestations of Shakti and carry the power of all creation and the secrets of cosmogenesis. The Rigveda itself is a creation of Kundalini Shakti, which is the power of Vak or Divine Speech, as it manifested at the beginning of this particular world age, but not merely in individuals but in great families of seers or Rishis. *The Rigveda itself is perhaps the greatest mantric effusion of Kundalini Shakti at a collective level.*

The Shakti of the Vedic hymns is the strongest of all stotras or Sanskrit hymns, reflecting the very rhythms of cosmic creation and the thousand syllables of the crown chakra. Yet bija mantras like Hreem and Shreem are more defined in Tantra and the Tantric bijas are the strongest of all bijas, the primal sounds behind the universe. The Vedas reflect the metrical power of Sanskrit, whereas Tantra reflects the power of Sanskrit seed sounds.

Kashmir Shaivism, perhaps the most comprehensive Tantric philosophy, contains an elaborate system of relating the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet to all the cosmic principles from the Absolute to the earth element. It views the Sanskrit letters as the Shaktis and the Mothers (Matrikas) through which everything in the universe is energized.

The older Vedic tradition contains a similar emphasis on the Sanskrit alphabet and letters, though many of the details have been lost. According the Vedas generally, as in the Chandogya Upanishads, the vowels relate to Indra (Purusha) and the consonants to death (Prakriti). In the Aitareya Aranyaka the sibilants or s and h sounds are said to relate to Prana. This is a corner stone of the Kashmir Shaivite view as well. The great system of Kashmir Shaivism with its deities,

mantras, pranas and tattvas reflecting the Sanskrit alphabet is a formulation of the older Vedic model.

Shiva, the Lord of Yoga

Shiva, if we look deeply, is the Supreme Deity of the Rigveda and its four main light forms as Agni, Soma, Surya and Indra (Vidyut). This statement may seem unusual, if not absurd, for those used to thinking that Vedas and Agamas are different or that Shiva is not a Vedic deity, because his name and form is not much present there. The problem is that such views only look superficially at the names and forms not to the inner content and energy of the Vedas.

Shiva is often called ‘Agni-Somatmakam’, meaning that ‘he has the nature of Agni and Soma’ as fire and water and all the other dualities that the two represent. Agni is his fierce or Rudra form. Soma is his blissful and linga form. Shiva is also regarded as Surya or the Sun, the pure light, Prakasha. As Prana, Shiva is also Vayu. He is Indra as the lord of perception and the power of mantra.

Shiva is the background deity of the Rigveda of which the other four main deities are but forms or manifestations. On one hand, they are facets of Shiva. On the other hand, they are like the sons of Shiva, which are his manifestations, with Rudra as the great father God in the Rigveda. The Vedic Yajna is itself the Tantric Yoga as an outer ritual, worship of the outer fire. Tantric Yoga is the Vedic Yajna internalized, worship of the inner fire of the Kundalini. The worship of Shiva maintains many Vedic forms of fire worship, use of Vedic mantras and communion with nature. Shaivites mark themselves with the sacred ash or Vibhuti from the fire. The Rudram, the most famous chant to Shiva, which is found in the Yajurveda, makes Shiva’s identity with the Vedic sacrifice very clear.



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